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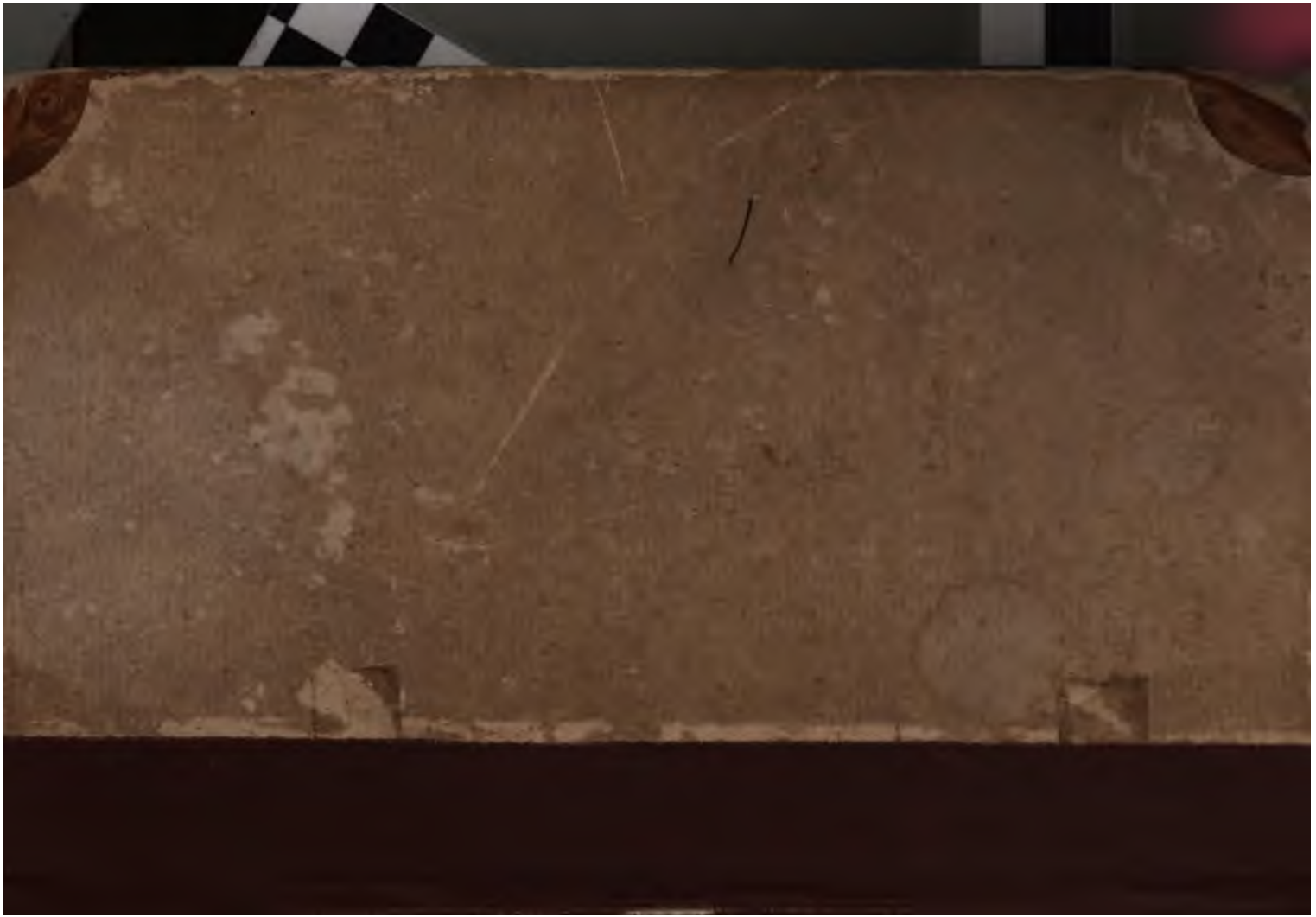

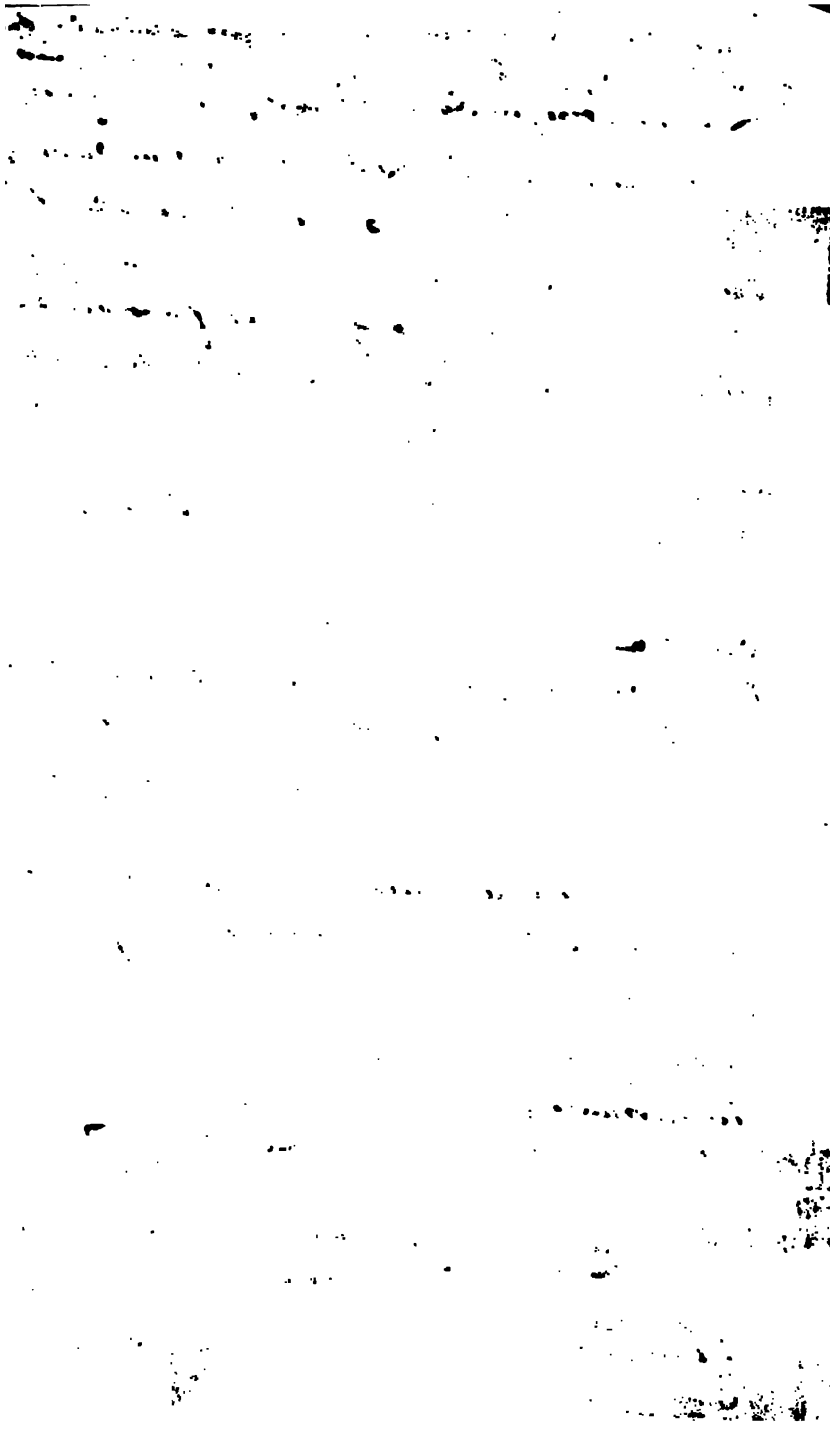

LECTURES

ON

RHETORIC

AND

BELLES LETTRES.

By HUGH BLAIR, D. D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE HIGH CHURCH, AND
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND BELLES LETTRES
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE following *Lectures* were read in the univerſity of Edinburgh, for twenty-four years. The publication of them, at preſent, was not altogether a matter of choice. Imperfect copies of them, in manuſcript, from notes taken by ſtudents who heard them read, were firſt privately handed about; and afterwards frequently expoſed to public ſale. When the author ſaw them circulate ſo currently, as even to be quoted in print *, and found himſelf often threatened with ſurreptitious publications of them, he judged it to be high time that they ſhould proceed from his own hand, rather than come into public view under ſome very defective and erroneous form.

They were originally deſigned for the initiation of youth into the ſtudy of belles lettres,

* Biographia Britannica. Article, *Addiſon.*

and of compoſition. With the ſame intention they are now publiſhed; and therefore, the form of lectures, in which they were at firſt compoſed, is ſtill retained. The author gives them to the world, neither as a work wholly original, nor as a compilation from the writings of others. On every ſubject contained in them, he has thought for himſelf. He conſulted his own ideas and reflections: and a great part of what will be found in theſe lectures is entirely his own. At the ſame time, he availed himſelf of the ideas and reflections of others, as far as he thought them proper to be adopted. To proceed in this manner, was his duty as a public profeſſor. It was incumbent on him, to convey to his pupils all the knowledge that could improve them; to deliver not merely what was new, but what might be uſeful, from whatever quarter it came. He hopes, that to ſuch as are ſtudying to cultivate their taſte, to form their ſtyle, or to prepare themſelves for public ſpeaking or compoſition, his lectures will afford a more comprehenſive view of what relates to theſe ſubjects, than, as far as he knows, is to be received from any one book in our language.

In order to render his work of greater ſervice, he has generally referred to the books which he conſulted, as far as he remembers them; that the readers might be directed to any farther illuſtration which they afford. But, as ſuch a length of time has elapſed ſince the firſt compoſition of his lectures, he may, perhaps, have adopted the ſentiments of ſome author into whoſe writings he had then looked, without now remembering whence he derived them.

In the opinions which he has delivered concerning ſuch a variety of authors, and of literary matters, as come under his conſideration, he cannot expect that all his readers will concur with him. The ſubjects are of ſuch a nature, as allow room for much diverſity of taſte and ſentiment: and the author will reſpectfully ſubmit to the judgment of the public.

Retaining the ſimplicity of the lecturing ſtyle, as beſt fitted for conveying inſtruction, he has aimed, in his language, at no more than perſpicuity. If, after the liberties which it was neceſſary for him to take, in criticizing the

ſtyle of the moſt eminent writers in our language, his own ſtyle ſhall be thought open to reprehenſion; all that he can ſay, is, that his book will add one to the many proofs already afforded to the world, of its being much eaſier to give inſtruction, than to ſet example.

LECTURE I.

Introduction.

ONE of the moſt diſtinguiſhed privileges which providence has conferred upon mankind, is the power of communicating their thoughts to one another. Deſtitute of this power, Reaſon would be a ſolitary, and, in ſome meaſure, an unavailing principle. Speech is the great inſtrument by which man becomes beneficial to man: and it is to the intercourſe and tranſmiſſion of thought, by means of ſpeech, that we are chiefly indebted for the improvement of thought itſelf. Small are the advances which a ſingle unaſſiſted individual can make towards perfecting any of his powers. What we call human reaſon, is not the effort or ability of one, ſo much as it is the reſult of the reaſon of many, ariſing from lights mutually communicated, in conſequence of diſcourſe and writing.

It is obvious, then, that writing and diſcourſe are objects entitled to the higheſt attention Whether the influence of the ſpeaker, or the entertainment of the hearer, be conſulted; whether

utility or pleaſure be the principal aim in view, we are prompted, by the ſtrongeſt motives, to ſtudy how we may communicate our thoughts to one another with moſt advantage. Accordingly we find, that in almoſt every nation, as ſoon as language had extended itſelf beyond that ſcanty communication which was requiſite for the ſupply of men's neceſſities, the improvement of diſcourſe began to attract regard. In the language even of rude uncultivated tribes, we can trace ſome attention to the grace and force of thoſe expreſſions which they uſed, when they ſought to perſuade or to affect. They were early ſenſible of a beauty in diſcourſe, and endeavoured to give it certain decorations which experience had taught them it was capable of receiving, long before the ſtudy of thoſe decorations was formed into a regular art.

But, among nations in a civilized ſtate, no art has been cultivated with more care, than that of language, ſtyle, and compoſition. The attention paid to it may, indeed, be aſſumed as one mark of the progreſs of ſociety towards its moſt improved period. For, according as ſociety improves and flouriſhes, men acquire more influence over one another by means of reaſoning and diſcourſe; and in proportion as that influence is felt to enlarge, it muſt follow, as a natural conſequence, that they will beſtow more care upon the methods of expreſſing their conceptions with propriety and eloquence. Hence we find, that in all the poliſhed nations of Europe, this

ſtudy has been treated as highly important, and has poſſeſſed a conſiderable place in every plan of liberal education.

Indeed, when the arts of ſpeech and writing are mentioned, I am ſenſible that prejudices againſt them are apt to riſe in the minds of many. A ſort of art is immediately thought of, that is oſtentatious and deceitful; the minute and trifling ſtudy of words alone; the pomp of expreſſion; the ſtudied fallacies of rhetoric; ornament ſubſtituted in the room of uſe. We need not wonder, that under ſuch imputations, all ſtudy of diſcourſe as an art, ſhould have ſuffered in the opinion of men of underſtanding: and I am far from denying, that rhetoric and criticiſm have ſometimes been ſo managed as to tend to the corruption, rather than to the improvement, of good taſte and true eloquence. But ſure it is equally poſſible to apply the principles of reaſon and good ſenſe to this art, as to any other that is cultivated among men. If the following lectures have any merit, it will conſiſt in an endeavour to ſubſtitute the application of theſe principles in the place of artificial and ſcholaſtic rhetoric; in an endeavour to explode falſe ornament, to direct attention more towards ſubſtance than ſhow, to recommend good ſenſe as the foundation of all good compoſition, and ſimplicity as eſſential to all true ornament.

When entering on the ſubject, I may be allowed, on this occaſion, to ſuggeſt a few thoughts concerning the importance and advantages

of ſuch ſtudies, and the rank they are entitled to poſſeſs in academical education *. I am under no temptation, for this purpoſe, of extolling their importance at the expenſe of any other department of ſcience. On the contrary, the ſtudy of rhetoric and belles lettres ſuppoſes and requires a proper acquaintance with the reſt of the liberal arts. It embraces them all within its circle, and recommends them to the higheſt regard. The firſt care of all ſuch as wiſh either to write with reputation, or to ſpeak in public ſo as to command attention, muſt be, to extend their knowledge; to lay in a rich ſtore of ideas relating to thoſe ſubjects of which the occaſions of life may call them to diſcourſe or to write. Hence, among the ancients, it was a fundamental principle, and frequently inculcated, "Quod omnibus diſciplinis & artibus debet eſſe "inſtructus orator;" that the orator ought to be an accompliſhed ſcholar, and converſant in every part of learning. It is indeed impoſſible to contrive an art, and very pernicious it were if it could be contrived, which ſhould give the ſtamp of merit to any compoſition rich or ſplendid

* The Author was the firſt who read lectures on this ſubject in the univerſity of Edinburgh. He began with reading them in a private character in the year 1759. In the following year he was choſen profeſſor of rhetoric by the magiſtrates and town-council of Edinburgh: and in 1762, his Majeſty was pleaſed to erect and endow a profeſſion of rhetoric and belles lettres in that univerſity; and the author was appointed the firſt regius profeſſor.

in expreſſion, but barren or erroneous in thought. They are the wretched attempts towards an art of this kind which have ſo often diſgraced oratory, and debaſed it below its true ſtandard. The graces of compoſition have been employed to diſguiſe or to ſupply the want of matter; and the temporary applauſe of the ignorant has been courted, inſtead of the laſting approbation of the diſcerning. But ſuch impoſture can never maintain its ground long. Knowledge and ſcience muſt furniſh the materials that form the body and ſubſtance of any valuable compoſition. Rhetoric ſerves to add the poliſh; and we know that none but firm and ſolid bodies can be poliſhed well.

Of thoſe who peruſe the following lectures, ſome, by the profeſſion to which they addict themſelves, or in conſequence of their prevailing inclination, may have the view of being employed in compoſition, or in public ſpeaking. Others, without any proſpect of this kind, may wiſh only to improve their taſte with reſpect to writing and diſcourſe, and to acquire principles which will enable them to judge for themſelves in that part of literature called the belles lettres.

With reſpect to the former, ſuch as may have occaſion to communicate their ſentiments to the public, it is abundantly clear that ſome preparation of ſtudy is requiſite for the end which they have in view. To ſpeak or to write perſpicuouſly and agreeably, with purity, with grace

and ſtrength, are attainments of the utmoſt conſequence to all who purpoſe, either by ſpeech or writing, to addreſs the public. For without being maſter of thoſe attainments, no man can do juſtice to his own conceptions; but how rich ſoever he may be in knowledge and in good ſenſe, will be able to avail himſelf leſs of thoſe treaſures, than ſuch as poſſeſs not half his ſtore, but who can diſplay what they poſſeſs with more propriety. Neither are theſe attainments of that kind for which we are indebted to nature merely. Nature has, indeed, conferred upon ſome a very favorable diſtinction in this reſpect, beyond others. But in theſe, as in moſt other talents ſhe beſtows, ſhe has left much to be wrought out by every man's own induſtry. So conſpicuous have been the effects of ſtudy and improvement in every part of eloquence; ſuch remarkable examples have appeared of perſons ſurmounting, by their diligence, the diſadvantages of the moſt untoward nature, that among the learned it has long been a conteſted, and remains ſtill an undecided point, whether nature or art confer moſt towards excelling in writing and diſcourſe.

With reſpect to the manner in which art can moſt effectually furniſh aſſiſtance for ſuch a purpoſe, there may be a diverſity of opinions. I by no means pretend to ſay that mere rhetorical rules, how juſt ſoever, are ſufficient to form an orator. Suppoſing natural genius to be favorable, more by a great deal will depend upon

private application and ſtudy, than upon any ſyſtem of inſtruction that is capable of being publicly communicated. But at the ſame time, though rules and inſtructions cannot do all that is requiſite, they may, however, do much that is of real uſe. They cannot, it is true, inſpire genius; but they can direct and aſſiſt it. They cannot remedy barrenneſs; but they may correct redundancy. They point out proper models for imitation. They bring into view the chief beauties that ought to be ſtudied, and the principal faults that ought to be avoided; and thereby tend to enlighten taſte, and to lead genius from unnatural deviations, into its proper channel. What would not avail for the production of great excellencies, may at leaſt ſerve to prevent the commiſſion of conſiderable errors.

All that regards the ſtudy of eloquence and compoſition, merits the higher attention upon this account, that it is intimately connected with the improvement of our intellectual powers. For I muſt be allowed to ſay, that when we are employed, after a proper manner, in the ſtudy of compoſition, we are cultivating reaſon itſelf. True rhetoric and ſound logic are very nearly allied. The ſtudy of arranging and expreſſing our thoughts with propriety, teaches to think, as well as to ſpeak, accurately. By putting our ſentiments into words, we always conceive them more diſtinctly. Every one who has the ſlighteſt acquaintance with compoſition knows, that when he expreſſes himſelf ill on any ſubject, when his

arrangement becomes looſe, and his ſentences turn feeble, the defects of his ſtyle can, almoſt on every occaſion, be traced back to his indiſtinct conception of the ſubject: ſo cloſe is the connection between thoughts and the words in which they are clothed.

The ſtudy of compoſition, important in itſelf at all times, has acquired additional importance from the taſte and manners of the preſent age. It is an age wherein improvements, in every part of ſcience, have been proſecuted with ardor. To all the liberal arts much attention has been paid; and to none more than to the beauty of language, and the grace and elegance of every kind of writing. The public ear is become refined. It will not eaſily bear what is ſlovenly and incorrect. Every author muſt aſpire to ſome merit in expreſſion, as well as in ſentiment, if he would not incur the danger of being neglected and deſpiſed.

I will not deny that the love of minute elegance, and attention to inferior ornaments of compoſition, may at preſent have engroſſed too great a degree of the public regard. It is indeed my opinion, that we lean to this extreme; often more careful of poliſhing ſtyle, than of ſtoring it with thought. Yet hence ariſes a new reaſon for the ſtudy of juſt and proper compoſition. If it be requiſite not to be deficient in elegance or ornament in times when they are in ſuch high eſtimation, it is ſtill more requiſite to attain the power of diſtinguiſhing falſe ornament

from true, in order to prevent our being carried away by that torrent of falſe and frivolous taſte, which never fails, when it is prevalent, to ſweep along with it the raw and the ignorant. They who have never ſtudied eloquence in its principles, nor have been trained to attend to the genuine and manly beauties of good writing, are always ready to be caught by the mere glare of language; and when they come to ſpeak in public, or to compoſe, have no other ſtandard on which to form themſelves, except what chances to be faſhionable and popular, how corrupted ſoever, or erroneous, that may be.

But as there are many who have no ſuch objects as either compoſition or public ſpeaking in view, let us next conſider what advantages may be derived by them, from ſuch ſtudies as form the ſubject of theſe lectures. To them, rhetoric is not ſo much a practical art as a ſpeculative ſcience; and the ſame inſtructions which aſſiſt others in compoſing, will aſſiſt them in judging of, and reliſhing, the beauties of compoſition. Whatever enables genius to execute well, will enable taſte to criticiſe juſtly.

When we name criticiſing, prejudices may perhaps ariſe, of the ſame kind with thoſe which I mentioned before with reſpect to rhetoric. As rhetoric has been ſometimes thought to ſignify nothing more than the ſcholaſtic ſtudy of words, and phraſes, and tropes, ſo criticiſm has been conſidered as merely the art of finding faults; as the frigid application of certain technical terms, by means

of which perſons are taught to cavil and cenſure in a learned manner. But this is the criticiſm of pedants only. True criticiſm is a liberal and humane art. It is the offspring of good ſenſe and refined taſte. It aims at acquiring a juſt diſcernment of the real merit of authors. It promotes a lively reliſh of their beauties, while it preſerves us from that blind and implicit veneration which would confound their beauties and faults in our eſteem. It teaches us, in a word, to admire and to blame with judgment, and not to follow the crowd blindly.

In an age when works of genius and literature are ſo frequently the ſubjects of diſcourſe, when every one erects himſelf into a judge, and when we can hardly mingle in polite ſociety without bearing ſome ſhare in ſuch diſcuſſions; ſtudies of this kind, it is not to be doubted, will appear to derive part of their importance from the uſe to which they may be applied in furniſhing materials for thoſe faſhionable topics of diſcourſe, and thereby enabling us to ſupport a proper rank in ſocial life.

But I ſhould be ſorry if we could not reſt the merit of ſuch ſtudies on ſomewhat of ſolid and intrinſical uſe independent of appearance and ſhow. The exerciſe of taſte and of ſound criticiſm, is in truth one of the moſt improving employments of the underſtanding. To apply the principles of good ſenſe to compoſition and diſcourſe; to examine what is beautiful, and why it is ſo; to employ ourſelves in diſtinguiſhing accurately between the

ſpecious and the ſolid, between affected and natural ornament, muſt certainly improve us not a little in the moſt valuable part of all philoſophy, the philoſophy of human nature. For ſuch diſquiſitions are very intimately connected with the knowledge of ourſelves. They neceſſarily lead us to reflect on the operations of the imagination, and the movements of the heart, and increaſe our acquaintance with ſome of the moſt refined feelings which belong to our frame.

Logical and ethical diſquiſitions move in a higher ſphere, and are converſant with objects of a more ſevere kind; the progreſs of the underſtanding in its ſearch after knowledge, and the direction of the will in the proper purſuit of good. In theſe they point out to man the improvement of his nature as an intelligent being; and his duties as the ſubject of moral obligation. Belles lettres and criticiſm chiefly conſider him as a being endowed with thoſe powers of ſtate and imagination, which were intended to embelliſh his mind, and to ſupply him with rational and uſeful entertainment. They open a field of inveſtigation peculiar to themſelves. All that relates to beauty, harmony, grandeur, and elegance; all that can ſooth the mind, gratify the fancy, or move the affections, belongs to their province. They preſent human nature under a different aſpect from that which it aſſumes to the view of other ſciences. They bring to light various ſprings of action which without their aid might have paſſed unobſerved; and which,

though of a delicate nature, frequently exert a powerful influence on ſeveral departments of human life.

Such ſtudies have alſo this peculiar advantage, that they exerciſe our reaſon without fatiguing it. They lead to inquiries acute, but not painful; profound, but not dry nor abſtruſe. They ſtrew flowers in the path of ſcience; and while they keep the mind bent, in ſome degree, and active, they relieve it at the ſame time from that more toilſome labor to which it muſt ſubmit in the acquiſition of neceſſary erudition, or the inveſtigation of abſtract truth.

The cultivation of taſte is farther recommended by the happy effects which it naturally tends to produce on human life. The moſt buſy man, in the moſt active ſphere, cannot be always occupied by buſineſs. Men of ſerious profeſſions cannot always be on the ſtretch of ſerious thought. Neither can the moſt gay and flouriſhing ſituations of fortune afford any man the power of filling all his hours with pleaſure. Life muſt always languiſh in the hands of the idle. It will frequently languiſh even in the hands of the buſy, if they have not ſome employment ſubſidiary to that which forms their main purſuit. How then ſhall theſe vacant ſpaces, thoſe unemployed intervals, which, more or leſs, occur in the life of every one, be filled up? How can we contrive to diſpoſe of them in any way that ſhall be more agreeable in itſelf, or more conſonant to the dignity of the human mind,

than in the entertainments of taſte, and the ſtudy of polite literature? He who is ſo happy as to have acquired a reliſh for theſe, has always at hand an innocent and irreproachable amuſement for his leiſure hours, to ſave him from the danger of many a pernicious paſſion. He is not in hazard of being a burden to himſelf. He is not obliged to fly to low company, or to court the riot of looſe pleaſures, in order to cure the tediouſneſs of exiſtence.

Providence ſeems plainly to have pointed out this uſeful purpoſe to which the pleaſures of taſte may be applied, by interpoſing them in a middle ſtation between the pleaſures of ſenſe, and thoſe of pure intellect. We were not deſigned to grovel always among objects ſo low as the former; nor are we capable of dwelling conſtantly in ſo high a region as the latter. The pleaſures of taſte refreſh the mind after the toils of the intellect, and the labors of abſtract ſtudy; and they gradually raiſe it above the attachments of ſenſe, and prepare it for the enjoyments of virtue.

So conſonant is this to experience, that in the education of youth, no object has in every age appeared more important to wiſe men, than to tincture them early with a reliſh for the entertainments of taſte. The tranſition is commonly made with eaſe from theſe to the diſcharge of the higher and more important duties of life. Good hopes may be entertained of thoſe whoſe minds have this liberal and elegant turn. Many

virtues may be grafted upon it. Whereas to be entirely devoid of reliſh for eloquence, poetry, or any of the fine arts, is juſtly conſtructed to be an unpromiſing ſymptom of youth; and raiſes ſuſpicions of their being prone to low gratifications, or deſtined to drudge in the more vulgar and illiberal purſuits of life.

There are indeed few good diſpoſitions of any kind with which the improvement of taſte is not more or leſs connected. A cultivated taſte increaſes ſenſibility to all the tender and humane paſſions, by giving them frequent exerciſe; while it tends to weaken the more violent and fierce emotions.

—— Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros. *

The elevated ſentiments and high examples which poetry, eloquence and hiſtory are often bringing under our view, naturally tend to nouriſh in our minds public ſpirit, the love of glory, contempt of external fortune, and the admiration of what is truly illuſtrious and great.

I will not go ſo far as to ſay that the improvement of taſte and of virtue is the ſame; or that they may always be expected to coexiſt in an equal degree. More powerful correctives than taſte can apply, are neceſſary for reforming

* Theſe polished arts have humaniz'd mankind,
Soften'd the rude, and calm'd the boiſt'rous mind.

the corrupt propenſities which too frequently prevail among mankind. Elegant ſpeculations are ſometimes found to float on the ſurface of the mind, while bad paſſions poſſeſs the interior regions of the heart. At the ſame time this cannot but be admitted, that the exerciſe of taſte is, in its native tendency, moral and purifying. From reading the moſt admired productions of genius, whether in poetry or proſe, almoſt every one riſes with ſome good impreſſions left on his mind; and though theſe may not always be durable, they are at leaſt to be ranked among the means of diſpoſing the heart to virtue. One thing is certain, and I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to illuſtrate it more fully, that without poſſeſſing the virtuous affections in a ſtrong degree, no man can attain eminence in the ſublime parts of eloquence. He muſt feel what a good man feels, if he expects greatly to move or to intereſt mankind. They are the ardent ſentiments of honor, virtue, magnanimity, and public ſpirit, that only can kindle that fire of genius, and call up into the mind thoſe high ideas, which attract the admiration of ages; and if this ſpirit be neceſſary to produce the moſt diſtinguiſhed efforts of eloquence, it muſt be neceſſary alſo to our reliſhing them with proper taſte and feeling.

On theſe general topics I ſhall dwell no longer; but proceed directly to the conſideration of the ſubjects which are to employ the following lectures. They divide themſelves into five parts. Firſt, ſome introductory diſſertations on

the ſtate of taſte, and upon the ſources of its pleaſures. Secondly, the conſideration of language. Thirdly, of ſtyle: Fourthly, of eloquence properly ſo called, or public ſpeaking in its different kinds. Laſtly, a critical examination of the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſpecies of compoſition, both in proſe and verſe.

LECTURE II.

Taſte.

THE nature of the preſent undertaking leads me to begin with ſome inquiries concerning taſte, as it is this faculty which is always appealed to in diſquiſitions concerning the merit of diſcourſe and writing.

There are few ſubjects on which men talk more looſely and indiſtinctly than on taſte; few which it is more difficult to explain with preciſion; and none which in this courſe of Lectures will appear more dry or abſtract. What I have to ſay on the ſubject ſhall be in the following order. I ſhall firſt explain the nature of taſte as a power or faculty in the human mind. I ſhall next conſider how far it is an improvable faculty. I ſhall ſhow the ſources of its improvement, and the characters of taſte in its moſt perfect ſtate. I ſhall then examine the various fluctuations to which it is liable, and inquire whether there be any ſtandard to which we can bring the different taſtes of men, in order to diſtinguiſh the corrupted from the true.

Taſte may be defined "The power of receiving pleaſure from the beauties of nature and of art." The firſt queſtion that occurs concerning it is, whether it is to be conſidered as an internal ſenſe, or as an exertion of reaſon? Reaſon is a very general term; but if we underſtand by it, that power of the mind which in ſpeculative matters diſcovers truth, and in practical matters judges of the fitneſs of means to an end, I apprehend the queſtion may be eaſily anſwered. For nothing can be more clear, than that taſte is not reſolvable into any ſuch operation of reaſon. It is not merely through a diſcovery of the underſtanding or a deduction of argument, that the mind receives pleaſure from a beautiful proſpect or a fine poem. Such objects often ſtrike us intuitively, and make a ſtrong impreſſion when we are unable to aſſign the reaſons of our being pleaſed. They ſometimes ſtrike in the ſame manner the philoſopher and the peaſant; the boy and the man. Hence the faculty by which we reliſh ſuch beauties, ſeems more a-kin to a feeling of ſenſe, than to a proceſs of the underſtanding; and accordingly from an external ſenſe it has borrowed its name; that ſenſe by which we receive and diſtinguiſh the pleaſures of food having, in ſeveral languages, given riſe to the word taſte in the metaphorical meaning under which we now conſider it. However, as in all ſubjects which regard the operations of the mind, the inaccurate uſe of words is to be carefully avoided, it muſt not be inferred

from what I have ſaid, that reaſon is excluded from the exertions of taſte. Though taſte beyond doubt, be ultimately founded on a certain natural and inſtinctive ſenſibility to beauty, yet reaſon, as I ſhall ſhow hereafter, aſſiſts taſte in many of its operations, and ſerves to enlarge its power *.

Taſte, in the ſenſe in which I have explained it, is a faculty common in ſome degree to all men. Nothing that belongs to human nature is more univerſal than the reliſh of beauty of one kind or other; of what is orderly, proportioned, grand, harmonious, new, or ſprightly. In children, the rudiments of taſte diſcover themſelves very early in a thouſand inſtances; in their fondneſs for regular bodies, their admiration of pictures and ſtatues, and imitations of all kinds; and their ſtrong attachment to whatever is new or marvellous. The moſt ignorant peaſants are delighted with ballads and tales, and are ſtruck with the beautiful appearances of nature in the earth and heavens. Even in the deſerts of America, where human nature ſhows itſelf in its moſt uncultivated ſtate, the ſavages have their ornaments of dreſs, their war and their death ſongs, their harangues, and their orators. We muſt

* See Dr. Gerard's Eſſay on Taſte. — D'Alembert's Reflections on the uſe and abuſe of philoſophy in matters which relate to Taſte. — Réflexions Critiques ſur la poëſie & ſur la peintute, Tom II. ch. 22 — 31. Elements of Criticiſm, chap. 25. — Mr. Hume's Eſſay on the Standard of Taſte. — Introduction to the Eſſay on the Sublime and Beautiful.

therefore conclude the principles of taſte to be deeply founded in the human mind. It is no leſs eſſential to man to have ſome diſcernment of beauty, than it is to poſſeſs the attributes of reaſon and of ſpeech *.

But although none be wholly devoid of this faculty, yet the degrees in which it is poſſeſſed are widely different. In ſome men only the

* On the ſubject of taſte conſidered as a power or faculty of the mind, much leſs is to be found among the ancient, than among the modern rhetorical and critical writers. The following remarkable paſſage in Cicero ſerves however to show, that his ideas on this ſubject agree perfectly with what has been ſaid above. He is ſpeaking of the beauties of ſtyle and numbers. "Illud autem nequis admiretur quonam modo hæc "vulgus imperitorum in audiendo, notet; cum in omni genere, "tum in hoc ipſo, magna quædam eſt vis, incredibiliſque "naturæ. Omnes enim tacito quodam ſenſu, ſine ulla arte "aut ratione, quæ ſint in artibus de rationibus recta & prava "dijudicant: idque cum faciunt in picturis, & in ſignis, & in "aliis operibus, ad quorum intelligentiam a natura minus "habent inſtrumenti, tum multo oſtendunt magis in verborum, "numerorum, vocumque judicio; quod ea ſunt in communibus "infixa ſenſibus; neque earum rerum quenquam funditus natura "voluit eſſe expertem." Cic. de Orat. lib. iii. cap. 50. Edit. Gruteri. —— Quinctilian ſeems to include taſte (for which, in the ſenſe which we now give to that word the ancients appear to have had no diſtinct name) under what he calls judicium. "Locus de judicio, mea quidem opinione adeo partibus hujus "operis omnibus connectus ac miſtus eſt, ut ne a ſententiis "quidem aut verbis ſaltem ſingulis poſſit ſeparari, nec magis "arte traditur quam guſtus aut odor. —— Ut contraria vitemus "& communia, ne quid in eloquendo corruptum obſcurumque "ſit, referatur oportet ad ſenſus qui non docentur." Inſtitut. lib. vi. cap. 3. Edit. Obrechti.

ſeeble glimmerings of Taſte appear; the beauties which they reliſh are of the coarſeſt kind; and of theſe they have but a weak and confuſed impreſſion: while in others, taſte riſes to an acute diſcernment and a lively enjoyment of the moſt refined beauties. In general, we may obſerve, that in the powers and pleaſures of taſte, there is a more remarkable inequality among men than is uſually found in point of common ſenſe, reaſon, and judgment. The conſtitution of our nature in this, as in all other reſpects, diſcovers admirable wiſdom. In the diſtribution of thoſe talents which are neceſſary for man's well being, nature hath made leſs diſtinction among her children. But in the diſtribution of thoſe which belong only to the ornamental part of life, ſhe hath beſtowed her favors with more frugality. She hath both ſown the ſeeds more ſparingly; and rendered a higher culture requiſite for bringing them to perfection.

This inequality of taſte among men is owing, without doubt, in part, to the different frame of their natures; to nicer organs, and finer internal powers, with which ſome are endowed beyond others. But, if it be owing in part to nature, it is owing to education and culture ſtill more. The illuſtration of this leads to my next remark on this ſubject, that taſte is a moſt improvable faculty, if there be any ſuch in human nature; a remark which gives great encouragement to ſuch a courſe of ſtudy as we are now propoſing to purſue. Of the truth of this aſſertion

we may eaſily be convinced, by only reflecting on that immenſe ſuperiority which education and improvement give to civilized, above barbarous nations, in refinement of Taſte; and on the ſuperiority which they give in the ſame nation to thoſe who have ſtudied the liberal arts, above the rude and untaught vulgar. The difference is ſo great, that there is perhaps no one particular in which theſe two claſſes of men are ſo far removed from each other as in reſpect of the powers and the pleaſures of taſte: and aſſuredly for this difference no other general cauſe can be aſſigned, but culture and education.—I ſhall now proceed to ſhow what the means are, by which taſte becomes ſo remarkably ſuſceptible of cultivation and progreſs.

Reflect firſt upon that great law of our nature, that exerciſe is the chief ſource of improvement in all our faculties. This holds both in our bodily, and in our mental powers. It holds even in our external ſenſes; although theſe be leſs the ſubject of cultivation than any of our other faculties. We ſee how acute the ſenſes become in perſons whoſe trade or buſineſs leads to nice exertions of them. Touch, for inſtance, becomes infinitely more exquiſite in men whoſe employment requires them to examine the poliſh of bodies, than it is in others. They who deal in microſcopical obſervations, or are accuſtomed to engrave on precious ſtones, acquire ſurpriſing accuracy of ſight in diſcerning the minuteſt objects; and practice in attending

to different flavors and taſtes of liquors, wonderfully improves the power of diſtinguiſhing them, and of tracing their compoſition. Placing internal taſte therefore on the footing of a ſimple ſenſe, it cannot be doubted that frequent exerciſe, and curious attention to its proper objects, muſt greatly heighten its power. Of this we have one clear proof in that part of taſte, which is called an ear for muſic. Experience every day ſhows, that nothing is more improvable. Only the ſimpleſt and plaineſt compoſitions are reliſhed at firſt; uſe and practice extend our pleaſure; teach us to reliſh finer melody, and by degrees enable us to enter into the intricate and compounded pleaſures of harmony. So an eye for the beauties of painting is never all at once acquired. It is gradually formed by being converſant among pictures, and ſtudying the works of the beſt maſters.

Preciſely in the ſame manner, with reſpect to the beauty of compoſition and diſcourſe, attention to the moſt approved models, ſtudy of the beſt authors, compariſons of lower and higher degrees of the ſame beauties, operate towards the refinement of taſte. When one is only beginning his acquaintance with works of genius, the ſentiment which attends them is obſcure and confuſed. He cannot point out the ſeveral excellencies or blemiſhes of a performance which he peruſes; he is at a loſs on what to reſt his judgment; all that can be expected is, that he ſhould tell in general whether he be pleaſed

or not. But allow him more experience in works of this kind, and his taſte becomes by degrees more exact and enlightened. He begins to perceive not only the character of the whole, but the beauties and defects of each part; and is able to deſcribe the peculiar qualities which he praiſes or blames. The miſt diſſipates which ſeemed formerly to hang over the object; and he can at length pronounce firmly, and without heſitation, concerning it. Thus in taſte, conſidered as mere ſenſibility, exerciſe opens a great ſource of improvement.

But although taſte be ultimately founded on ſenſibility; it muſt not be conſidered as inſtinctive ſenſibility alone. Reaſon and good ſenſe, as I before hinted, have ſo extenſive an influence on all the operations and deciſions of taſte, that a thorough good taſte may well be conſidered as a power compounded of natural ſenſibility to beauty, and of improved underſtanding. In order to be ſatisfied of this, let us obſerve, that the greater part of the productions of genius are no other than imitations of nature; repreſentations of the characters, actions, or manners of men. The pleaſure we receive from ſuch imitations or repreſentations is founded on mere taſte: but to judge whether they be properly executed, belongs to the underſtanding, which compares the copy with the original.

In reading, for inſtance, ſuch a poem as the Æneid, a great part of our pleaſure ariſes from the plan or ſtory being well conducted, and all

the parts joined together with probability and due connexion; from the characters being taken from nature, the ſentiments being ſuited to the characters, and the ſtyle to the ſentiments. The pleaſure which ariſes from a poem ſo conducted, is felt or enjoyed by taſte as an internal ſenſe; but the diſcovery of this conduct in the poem is owing to reaſon; and the more that reaſon enables us to diſcover ſuch propriety in the conduct, the greater will be our pleaſure. We are pleaſed, through our natural ſenſe of beauty. Reaſon ſhows us why, and upon what grounds, we are pleaſed. Wherever in works of taſte, any reſemblance to nature is aimed at; wherever there is any reference of parts to a whole, or of means to an end, as there is indeed in almoſt every writing and diſcourſe, there the underſtanding muſt always have a great part to act.

Here then is a wide field for reaſon's exerting its powers in relation to the objects of taſte, particularly with reſpect to compoſition, and works of genius; and hence ariſes a ſecond and a very conſiderable ſource of the improvement of taſte, from the application of reaſon and good ſenſe to ſuch productions of genius. Spurious beauties, ſuch as unnatural characters, forced ſentiments, affected ſtyle, may pleaſe for a little; but they pleaſe only becauſe their oppoſition to nature and to good ſenſe has not been examined, or attended to. Once ſhow how nature might have been more juſtly imitated

or repreſented; how the writer might have managed his ſubject to greater advantage; the illuſion will preſently be diſſipated, and thoſe falſe beauties will pleaſe no more.

From theſe two ſources then, firſt, the frequent exerciſe of taſte, and next the application of good ſenſe and reaſon to the objects of taſte, taſte as a power of the mind receives its improvement. In its perfect ſtate, it is undoubtedly the reſult both of nature and of art. It ſuppoſes our natural ſenſe of beauty to be refined by frequent attention to the moſt beautiful objects, and at the ſame time to be guided and improved by the light of the underſtanding.

I muſt be allowed to add, that as a ſound head, ſo likewiſe a good heart, is a very material requiſite to juſt taſte. The moral beauties are not only in themſelves ſuperior to all others, but they exert an influence, either more near or more remote, on a great variety of other objects of taſte. Wherever the affections, characters, or actions of men are concerned (and theſe certainly afford the nobleſt ſubjects to genius), there can be neither any juſt or affecting deſcription of them, nor any thorough feeling of the beauty of that deſcription, without our poſſeſſing the virtuous affections. He whoſe heart is indelicate or hard, he who has no admiration of what is truly noble or praiſeworthy, nor the proper ſympathetic ſenſe of what is ſoft and tender, muſt have a very

imperfect reliſh of the higheſt beauties of eloquence and poetry.

The characters of taſte when brought to its moſt perfect ſtate are all reducible to two, delicacy and correctneſs.

Delicacy of taſte reſpects principally the perfection of that natural ſenſibility on which taſte is founded. It implies thoſe finer organs or powers which enable us to diſcover beauties that lie hid from a vulgar eye. One may have ſtrong ſenſibility, and yet be deficient in delicate taſte. He may be deeply impreſſed by ſuch beauties as he perceives; but he perceives only what is in ſome degree coarſe, what is bold and palpable; while chaſter and ſimpler ornaments eſcape his notice. In this ſtate taſte generally exiſts among rude and unrefined nations. But a perſon of delicate taſte both feels ſtrongly, and feels accurately. He ſees diſtinctions and differences where others ſee none; the moſt latent beauty does not eſcape him, and he is ſenſible of the ſmalleſt blemiſh. Delicacy of taſte is judged of by the ſame marks that we uſe in judging of the delicacy of an external ſenſe. As the goodneſs of the palate is not tried by ſtrong flavors, but by a mixture of ingredients, where, notwithſtanding the confuſion, we remain ſenſible of each; in like manner delicacy of internal taſte appears, by a quick and lively ſenſibility to its fineſt, moſt compounded, or moſt latent objects.

Correctneſs of taſte reſpects chiefly the improvement which that faculty receives through

its connexion with the underſtanding. A man of correct taſte is one who is never impoſed on by counterfeit beauties; who carries always in his mind that ſtandard of good ſenſe which he employs in judging of every thing. He eſtimates with propriety the comparative merit of the ſeveral beauties which he meets with in any work of genius; refers them to their proper claſſes; aſſigns the principles, as far as they can be traced, whence their power of pleaſing us flows; and is pleaſed himſelf preciſely in that degree in which he ought, and no more.

It is true that theſe two qualities of taſte, delicacy and correctneſs, mutually imply each other. No taſte can be exquiſitely delicate without being correct; nor can be thoroughly correct without being delicate. But ſtill a predominancy of one or other quality in the mixture is often viſible. The power of delicacy is chiefly ſeen in diſcerning the true merit of a work; the power of correctneſs, in rejecting falſe pretenſions to merit. Delicacy leans more to feeling; correctneſs more to reaſon and judgment. The former is more the gift of nature; the latter, more the product of culture and art. Among the ancient critics, Longinus poſſeſſed moſt delicacy; Ariſtotle, moſt correctneſs. Among the moderns, Mr. Addiſon is a high example of delicate taſte; Dean Swift, had he written on the ſubject of criticiſm,

would perhaps have afforded the example of a correct one.

Having viewed taſte in its moſt improved and perfect ſtate, I come next to conſider its deviations from that ſtate, the fluctuations and changes to which it is liable; and to inquire whether, in the midſt of theſe, there be any means of diſtinguiſhing a true from a corrupted taſte. This brings us to the moſt difficult part of our taſk. For it muſt be acknowledged, that no principle of the human mind is, in its operations, more fluctuating and capricious than taſte. Its variations have been ſo great and frequent, as to create a ſuſpicion with ſome, of its being merely arbitrary; grounded on no foundation, aſcertainable by no ſtandard, but wholly dependent on changing fancy; the conſequence of which would be, that all ſtudies or regular inquiries concerning the objects of taſte were vain. In architecture, the Grecian models were long eſteemed the moſt perfect. In ſucceeding ages, the Gothic architecture alone prevailed, and afterwards the Grecian taſte revived in all its vigor, and engroſſed the public admiration. In eloquence and poetry, the Aſiatics at no time reliſhed any thing but what was full of ornament, and ſplendid in a degree that we would denominate gaudy; whilſt the Greeks admired only chaſte and ſimple beauties, and deſpiſed the Aſiatic oſtentation. In our own country, how many writings that were greatly extolled two or

three centuries ago, are now fallen into entire diſrepute and oblivion? Without going back to remote inſtances, how very different is the taſte of poetry which prevails in Great Britain now, from what prevailed there no longer ago than the reign of King Charles II. which the authors too of that time deemed an Auguſtan age: when nothing was in vogue but an affected brilliancy of wit; when the ſimple majeſty of Milton was overlooked, and Paradiſe Loſt almoſt entirely unknown; when Cowley's labored and unnatural conceits were admired as the very quinteſſence of genius; Waller's gay, ſprightlineſs was miſtaken for the tender ſpirit of love poetry; and ſuch writers as Suckling and Etheridge were held in eſteem for dramatic compoſition?

The queſtion is, what concluſion we are to form from ſuch inſtances as theſe? Is there any thing that can be called a ſtandard of taſte, by appealing to which we may diſtinguiſh between a good and a bad taſte? Or, is there in truth no ſuch diſtinction; and are we to hold that, according to the proverb, there is no diſputing of taſtes; but that whatever pleaſes is right, for that reaſon that it does pleaſe? This is the queſtion, and a very nice and ſubtile one it is, which we are now to diſcuſs.

I begin by obſerving, that if there be no ſuch thing as any ſtandard of taſte, this conſequence muſt immediately follow, that all taſtes are equally good; a poſition, which though it may paſs unnoticed in ſlight matters, and when we

ſpeak of the leſſer differences among the taſtes of men, yet when we apply it to the extremes, its abſurdity preſently becomes glaring. For is there any one who will ſeriouſly maintain that the taſte of a Hottentot or a Laplander is as delicate and as correct as that of a Longinus or an Addiſon? or, that he can be charged with no defect or incapacity who thinks a common newswriter as excellent an hiſtorian as Tacitus? As it would be held downright extravagance to talk in this manner, we are led unavoidably to this concluſion, that there is ſome foundation for the preference of one man's taſte to that of another; or, that there is a good and a bad, a right and a wrong in taſte, as in other things.

But to prevent miſtakes on this ſubject, it is neceſſary to obſerve next, that the diverſity of taſtes which prevails among mankind does not in every caſe infer corruption of taſte, or oblige us to ſeek for ſome ſtandard in order to determine who are in the right. The taſtes of men may differ very conſiderably as to their object, and yet none of them be wrong. One man reliſhes poetry moſt; another takes pleaſure in nothing but hiſtory. One prefers comedy; another, tragedy. One admires the ſimple; another, the ornamented ſtyle. The young are amuſed with gay and ſprightly compoſitions. The elderly are more entertained with thoſe of a graver caſt. Some nations delight in bold pictures of manners and ſtrong repreſentations of paſſion. Others incline to more correct and regular elegance both

in deſcription and ſentiment. Though all differ, yet all pitch upon ſome one beauty which peculiarly ſuits their turn of mind; and therefore no one has a title to condemn the reſt. It is not in matters of taſte, as in queſtions of mere reaſon, where there is but one concluſion that can be true, and all the reſt are erroneous. Truth, which is the object of reaſon, is one; beauty, which is the object of taſte, is manifold. Taſte therefore admits of latitude and diverſity of objects, in ſufficient conſiſtency with goodneſs or juſtneſs of taſte.

But then, to explain this matter thoroughly, I muſt obſerve farther, that this admiſſible diverſity of taſtes can only have place where the objects of taſte are different. Where it is with reſpect to the ſame object that men diſagree, when one condemns that as ugly, which another admires as highly beautiful; then it is no longer diverſity, but direct oppoſition of taſte that takes place; and therefore one muſt be in the right, and another in the wrong, unleſs that abſurd paradox were allowed to hold, that all taſtes are equally good and true. One man prefers Virgil to Homer. Suppoſe that I, on the other hand, admire Homer more than Virgil. I have as yet no reaſon to ſay that our taſtes are contradictory. The other perſon is moſt ſtruck with the elegance and tenderneſs which are the characteriſtics of Virgil; I, with the ſimplicity and fire of Homer. As long as neither

neither of us deny that both Homer and Virgil have great beauties, our difference falls within the compaſs of that diverſity of taſtes, which I have ſhowed to be natural and allowable. But if the other man ſhall aſſert that Homer has no beauties whatever; that he holds him to be a dull and ſpiritleſs writer, and that he would as ſoon peruſe any old legend of knight-errantry as the Iliad; then I exclaim, that my antagoniſt either is void of all taſte, or that his taſte is corrupted in a miſerable degree; and I appeal to whatever I think the ſtandard of taſte, to ſhow him that he is in the wrong.

What that ſtandard is, to which in ſuch oppoſition of taſtes, we are obliged to have recourſe remains to be traced. A ſtandard properly ſignifies, that which is of ſuch undoubted authority as to be the teſt of other things of the ſame kind. Thus a ſtandard weight or meaſure, is that which is appointed by law to regulate all other meaſures and weights. Thus the court is ſaid to be the ſtandard of good breeding; and the ſcripture, of theological truth.

When we ſay that nature is the ſtandard of taſte, we lay down a principle very true and juſt, as far as it can be applied. There is no doubt, that in all caſes where an imitation is intended of ſome object that exiſts in nature, as in repreſenting human characters or actions, conformity to nature affords a full and diſtinct criterion of what is truly beautiful. Reaſon hath in ſuch caſes full ſcope for exerting its authority

for approving or condemning; by comparing the copy with the original. But there are innumerable caſes in which this rule cannot be at all applied; and conformity to nature, is an expreſſion frequently uſed, without any diſtinct or determinate meaning. We muſt therefore ſearch for ſomewhat that can be rendered more clear and preciſe, to be the ſtandard of taſte.

Taſte, as I before explained it, is ultimately founded on an internal ſenſe of beauty, which is natural to men, and which, in its application to particular objects, is capable of being guided and enlightened by reaſon. Now, were there any one perſon who poſſeſſed in full perfection all the powers of human nature, whoſe internal ſenſes were in every inſtance exquiſite and juſt, and whoſe reaſon was unerring and ſure, the determinations of ſuch a perſon concerning beauty, would, beyond doubt, be a perfect ſtandard for the taſte of all others. Wherever their taſte differed from his, it could be imputed only to ſome imperfection in their natural powers. But as there is no ſuch living ſtandard, no one perſon to whom all mankind will allow ſuch ſubmiſſion to be due, what is there of ſufficient authority to be the ſtandard of the various and oppoſite taſtes of men? Moſt certainly there is nothing but the taſte, as far as it can be gathered, of human nature. That which men concur the moſt in admiring muſt be held to be beautiful. His taſte muſt be eſteemed juſt and true, which coincides with

the general ſentiments of men. In this ſtandard we muſt reſt. To the ſenſe of mankind the ultimate appeal muſt ever lie, in all works of taſte. If any one ſhould maintain that ſugar was bitter and tobacco was ſweet, no reaſonings could avail to prove it. The taſte of ſuch a perſon would infallibly be held to be diſeaſed, merely becauſe it differed ſo widely from the taſte of the ſpecies to which he belongs. In like manner, with regard to the objects of ſentiment or internal taſte, the common feelings of men carry the ſame authority, and have a title to regulate the taſte of every individual.

But have we then, it will be ſaid, no other criterion of what is beautiful, than the approbation of the majority? Muſt we collect the voices of others, before we form any judgment for ourſelves, of what deſerves applauſe in eloquence or poetry? By no means; there are principles of reaſon and ſound judgment which can be applied to matters of taſte, as well as to the ſubjects of ſcience and philoſophy. He who admires or cenſures any work of genius, is always ready, if his taſte be in any degree improved, to aſſign ſome reaſons of his deciſion. He appeals to principles, and points out the grounds on which he proceeds. Taſte is a ſort of compound power, in which the light of the underſtanding always mingles, more or leſs, with the feelings of ſentiment.

But, though reaſon can carry us a certain length in judging concerning works of taſte, it

is not to be forgotten that the ultimate conclusions to which our reaſonings lead, refer at laſt to ſenſe and perception. We may ſpeculate and argue concerning propriety of conduct in a tragedy, or an epic poem. Juſt reaſonings on the ſubject will correct the caprice of unenlightened taſte, and eſtabliſh principles for judging of what deſerves praiſe. But, at the ſame time, theſe reaſonings appeal always, in the laſt reſort, to feeling. The foundation upon which they reſt, is what has been found from experience to pleaſe mankind moſt univerſally. Upon this ground we prefer a ſimple and natural, to an artificial and affected ſtyle; a regular and well-connected ſtory, to looſe and ſcattered narratives; a cataſtrophe which is tender and pathetic, to one which leaves us unmoved. It is from conſulting our own imagination and heart, and from attending to the feelings of others, that any principles are formed which acquire authority in matters of taſte *.

* The difference between the authors who found the ſtandard of taſte upon the common feelings of human nature aſcertained by general approbation, and thoſe who found it upon eſtabliſhed principles which can be aſcertained by reaſon, is more an apparent than a real difference. Like many other literary controverſies, it turns chiefly on modes of expreſſion. For they who lay the greateſt ſtreſs on ſentiment and feeling, make no ſcruple of applying argument and reaſon to matters of taſte. They appeal, like other writers, to eſtabliſhed principles, in judging of the excellencies of eloquence or poetry; and plainly ſhow, that the general approbation to which they ultimately recur, is an approbation reſulting from diſcuſſion

When we refer to the concurring ſentiments of men as the ultimate teſt of what is to be accounted beautiful in the arts, this is to be always underſtood of men placed in ſuch ſituations as are favorable to the proper exertions of taſte. Every one muſt perceive, that among rude and uncivilized nations, and during the ages of ignorance and darkneſs, any looſe notions that are entertained concerning ſuch ſubjects carry no authority. In thoſe ſtates of ſociety, taſte has no materials on which to operate. It is either totally ſuppreſſed, or appears in its loweſt and moſt imperfect form. We refer to the ſentiments of mankind in poliſhed and flouriſhing nations; when arts are cultivated and manners refined; when works of genius are ſubjected to free diſcuſſion, and taſte is improved by ſcience and philoſophy.

Even among nations, at ſuch a period of ſociety, I admit, that accidental cauſes may

as well as from ſentiment. They, on the other hand, who, in order to vindicate taſte from any ſuſpicion of being arbitrary, maintain that it is aſcertainable by the ſtandard of reaſon, admit nevertheleſs, that what pleaſes univerſally, muſt on that account be held to be truly beautiful; and that no rules or concluſions concerning objects of taſte, can have any juſt authority, if they be found to contradict the general ſentiments of men. Theſe two ſyſtems, therefore, differ in reality very little from one another. Sentiment and reaſon enter into both; and by allowing to each of theſe powers its due place, both ſyſtems may be rendered conſiſtent. Accordingly, it is in this light that I have endeavoured to place the ſubject.

occaſionally warp the proper operations of taſte; ſometimes the ſtate of religion, ſometimes the form of government, may for a while pervert it; a licentious court may introduce a taſte for falſe ornaments, and diſſolute writings. The uſage of one admired genius may procure approbation for his faults, and even render them faſhionable. Sometimes envy may have power to bear down, for a little, productions of great merit; while popular humor, or party ſpirit, may, at other times, exalt to a high, though ſhort-lived, reputation, what little deſerved it. But though ſuch caſual circumſtances give the appearance of caprice to the judgments of taſte, that appearance is eaſily corrected. In the courſe of time, the genuine taſte of human nature never fails to diſcloſe itſelf, and to gain the aſcendant over any fantaſtic and corrupted modes of taſte which may chance to have been introduced. Theſe may have currency for a while, and miſlead ſuperficial judges; but being ſubjected to examination, by degrees they paſs away; while that alone remains which is founded on ſound reaſon, and the native feelings of men.

I by no means pretend, that there is any ſtandard of taſte, to which, in every particular inſtance, we can reſort for clear and immediate determination. Where, indeed, is ſuch a ſtandard to be found for deciding any of thoſe great controverſies in reaſon and philoſophy, which perpetually divide mankind? In the preſent

caſe there was plainly no occaſion for any ſuch ſtrict and abſolute proviſion to be made. In order to judge of what is morally good or evil, of what man ought, or ought not in duty to do, it was fit that the means of clear and preciſe determination ſhould be afforded us. But to aſcertain, in every caſe with the utmoſt exactneſs what is beautiful or elegant, was not at all neceſſary to the happineſs of man. And therefore ſome diverſity in feeling was here allowed to take place; and room was left for diſcuſſion and debate, concerning the degree of approbation to which any work of genius is entitled.

The concluſion, which it is ſufficient for us to reſt upon, is, that taſte is far from being an arbitrary principle, which is ſubject to the fancy of every individual, and which admits of no criterion for determining whether it be falſe or true. Its foundation is the ſame in all human minds. It is built upon ſentiments and perceptions which belong to our nature; and which, in general, operate with the ſame uniformity as our other intellectual principles. When theſe ſentiments are perverted by ignorance and prejudice, they are capable of being rectified by reaſon. Their ſound and natural ſtate is ultimately determined, by comparing them with the general taſte of mankind. Let men declaim as much as they pleaſe, concerning the caprice and the uncertainty of taſte, it is found, by experience, that there are beauties, which, if they be diſplayed in a proper light have power

to command lasting and general admiration. In every composition, what interests the imagination, and touches the heart pleases all ages and all nations. There is a certain string, which, being properly struck, the human heart is so made as to answer to it.

Hence the universal testimony which the most improved nations of the earth have conspired, throughout a long tract of ages, to give to some few works of genius; such as the Iliad of Homer, and the Æneid of Virgil. Hence the authority which such works have acquired, as standards in some degree of poetical composition; since from them we are enabled to collect what the sense of mankind is, concerning those beauties which give them the highest pleasure, and which therefore poetry ought to exhibit. Authority or prejudice may, in one age or country, give a temporary reputation to an indifferent poet, or a bad artist; but when foreigners, or when posterity examine his works, his faults are discerned, and the genuine taste of human nature appears. "Opinionum commenta delet dies; naturæ judicia confirmat." Time overthrows the illusions of opinion, but establishes the decisions of nature.

LECTURE III.

Criticiſm.—Genius.—Pleaſures of taſte.—Sublimity in Objects.

TASTE, criticiſm, and genius, are words currently employed, without diſtinct ideas annexed to them. In beginning a courſe of lectures where ſuch words muſt often occur, it is neceſſary to aſcertain their meaning with ſome preciſion. Having in the laſt lecture treated of taſte, I proceed to explain the nature and foundation of criticiſm. True criticiſm is the application of taſte and of good ſenſe to the ſeveral fine arts. The object which it propoſes is, to diſtinguiſh what is beautiful and what is faulty in every performance; from particular inſtances to aſcend to general principles; and ſo to form rules or concluſions concerning the ſeveral kinds of beauty in works of genius.

The rules of criticiſm are not formed by any induction, *à priori*, as it is called; that is, they are not formed by a train of abſtract reaſoning, independent of facts and obſervations. Criticiſm is an art founded wholly on experience; on the obſervation of ſuch beauties as have come neareſt

to command laſting and general admiration. In every compoſition, what intereſts the imagination, and touches the heart pleaſes all ages and all nations. There is a certain ſtring, which, being properly ſtruck, the human heart is ſo made as to anſwer to it.

Hence the univerſal teſtimony which the moſt improved nations of the earth have conſpired, throughout a long tract of ages, to give to ſome few works of genius; ſuch as the Iliad of Homer, and the Æneid of Virgil. Hence the authority which ſuch works have acquired, as ſtandards in ſome degree of poetical compoſition; ſince from them we are enabled to collect what the ſenſe of mankind is, concerning thoſe beauties which give them the higheſt pleaſure, and which therefore poetry ought to exhibit. Authority or prejudice may, in one age or country, give a temporary reputation to an indifferent poet, or a bad artiſt; but when foreigners, or when poſterity examine his works, his faults are diſcerned, and the genuine taſte of human nature appears. "Opinionum commenta delet dies; naturæ judicia confirmat." Time overthrows the illuſions of opinion, but eſtabliſhes the deciſions of nature.

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to the ſtandard which I before eſtabliſhed: that is, of ſuch beauties as have been found to pleaſe mankind moſt generally. For example; Ariſtotle's rules concerning the unity of action in dramatic and epic compoſition, were not rules firſt diſcovered by logical reaſoning; and then applied to poetry; but they were drawn from the practice of Homer and Sophocles: they were founded upon obſerving the ſuperior pleaſure which we receive from the relation of an action which is one and entire, beyond what we receive from the relation of ſcattered and unconnected facts. Such obſervations taking their riſe at firſt from feeling and experience, were found on examination to be ſo conſonant to reaſon, and to the principles of human nature, as to paſs into eſtabliſhed rules, and to be conveniently applied for judging of the excellency of any performance. This is the moſt natural account of the origin of criticiſm.

A maſterly genius, it is true, will of himſelf, untaught, compoſe in ſuch a manner as ſhall be agreeable to the moſt material rules of criticiſm; for as theſe rules are founded in nature, nature will often ſuggeſt them in practice. Homer, it is more than probable, was acquainted with no ſyſtems of the art of poetry. Guided by genius alone, he compoſed in verſe a regular ſtory, which all poſterity has admired. But this is no argument againſt the uſefulneſs of criticiſm as an art. For as no human genius is perfect, there is no writer but may receive aſſiſtance

from critical obſervations upon the beauties and faults of thoſe who have gone before him. No obſervations or rules can indeed ſupply the defect of genius, or inſpire it where it is wanting. But they may often direct it into its proper channel; they may correct its extravagancies, and point out to it the moſt juſt and proper imitation of nature. Critical rules are deſigned chiefly to ſhow the faults that ought to be avoided. To nature we muſt be indebted for the production of eminent beauties.

From what has been ſaid, we are enabled to form a judgment concerning thoſe complaints which it has long been faſhionable for petty authors to make againſt critics and criticiſm. Critics have been repreſented as the great abridgers of the native liberty of genius; as the impoſers of unnatural ſhackles and bonds upon writers, from whoſe cruel perſecution they muſt fly to the public, and implore its protection. Such ſupplicatory prefaces are not calculated to give very favorable ideas of the genius of the author. For every good writer will be pleaſed to have his work examined by the principles of ſound underſtanding, and true taſte. The declamations againſt criticiſm commonly proceed upon this ſuppoſition, that critics are ſuch as judge by rule, not by feeling; which is ſo far from being true, that they who judge after this manner are pedants, not critics. For all the rules of genuine criticiſm I have ſhown to be ultimately founded on feeling; and taſte and

feeling are neceſſary to guide us in the application of theſe rules to every particular inſtance. As there is nothing in which all ſorts of perſons more readily affect to be judges than in works of taſte, there is no doubt that the number of incompetent critics will always be great. But this affords no more foundation for a general invective againſt criticiſm, than the number of bad philoſophers or reaſoners affords againſt reaſon and philoſophy.

An objection more plauſible may be formed againſt criticiſm, from the applauſe that ſome performances have received from the public, which, when accurately conſidered, are found to contradict the rules eſtabliſhed by criticiſm. Now, according to the principles laid down in the laſt lecture, the public is the ſupreme judge to whom the laſt appeal muſt be made in every work of taſte; as the ſtandard of taſte is founded on the ſentiments that are natural and common to all men. But with reſpect to this we are to obſerve, that the ſenſe of the public is often too haſtily judged of. The genuine public taſte does not always appear in the firſt applauſe given upon the publication of any new work. There are both a great vulgar and a ſmall, apt to be catched and dazzled by very ſuperficial beauties, the admiration of which in a little time paſſes away: and ſometimes a writer may acquire great temporary reputation merely by his compliance with the paſſions or prejudices, with the party-ſpirit or ſuperſtitious notions, that

may chance to rule for a time almoſt a whole nation. In ſuch caſes, though the public may ſeem to praiſe, true criticiſm may with reaſon condemn; and it will in progreſs of time gain the aſcendant: for the judgment of true criticiſm, and the voice of the public, when once become unprejudiced and diſpaſſionate, will ever coincide at laſt.

Inſtances, I admit, there are, of ſome works that contain groſs tranſgreſſions of the laws of criticiſm, acquiring, nevertheleſs, a general, and even a laſting admiration. Such are the plays of Shakſpeare, which, conſidered as dramatic poems, are irregular in the higheſt degree. But then we are to remark, that they have gained the public admiration, not by their being irregular, not by their tranſgreſſions of the rules of art, but in ſpite of ſuch tranſgreſſions. They poſſeſs other beauties which are conformable to juſt rules; and the force of theſe beauties has been ſo great as to overpower all cenſure, and to give the public a degree of ſatisfaction ſuperior to the diſguſt ariſing from their blemiſhes. Shakſpeare pleaſes, not by his bringing the tranſactions of many years into one play; not by his groteſque mixtures of tragedy and comedy in one piece, nor by the ſtrained thoughts, and affected witticiſms, which he ſometimes employs. Theſe we conſider as blemiſhes, and impute them to the groſſneſs of the age in which he lived. But he pleaſes by his animated and maſterly repreſentations of characters, by the livelineſs of his

deſcriptions, the force of his ſentiments, and his poſſeſſing, beyond all writers, the natural language of paſſion: beauties which true criticiſm no leſs teaches us to place in the higheſt rank, than nature teaches us to feel.—Thus much it may ſuffice to have ſaid concerning the origin, office, and importance of criticiſm.

I proceed next to explain the meaning of another term, which there will be frequent occaſion to employ in theſe lectures; that is, *genius*.

Taſte and genius are two words frequently joined together; and therefore, by inaccurate thinkers, confounded. They ſignify however two quite different things. The difference between them can be clearly pointed out; and it is of importance to remember it. Taſte conſiſts in the power of judging: genius, in the power of executing. One may have a conſiderable degree of taſte in poetry, eloquence, or any of the fine arts, who has little or hardly any genius for compoſition or execution in any of theſe arts: but genius cannot be found without including taſte alſo. Genius, therefore, deſerves to be conſidered as a higher power of the mind than taſte. Genius always imports ſomething inventive or creative; which does not reſt in mere ſenſibility to beauty where it is perceived, but which can, moreover, produce new beauties, and exhibit them in ſuch a manner as ſtrongly to impreſs the minds of others. Refined taſte

forms a good critic; but genius is farther neceſſary to form the poet, or the orator.

It is proper alſo to obſerve, that genius is a word, which, in common acceptation, extends much farther than to the objects of taſte. It is uſed to ſignify that talent or aptitude which we receive from nature, for excelling in any one thing whatever. Thus we ſpeak of a genius for mathematics, as well as of a genius for poetry; of a genius for war, for politics, or for any mechanical employment.

This talent or aptitude for excelling in ſome one particular, is, I have ſaid, what we receive from nature. By art and ſtudy, no doubt, it may be greatly improved; but by them alone it cannot be acquired. As genius is a higher faculty than taſte, it is ever, according to the uſual frugality of nature, more limited in the ſphere of its operations. It is not uncommon to meet with perſons who have an excellent taſte in ſeveral of the polite arts, ſuch as muſic, poetry, painting, and eloquence, altogether: but, to find one who is an excellent performer in all theſe arts, is much more rare; or rather, indeed, ſuch an one is not to be looked for. A ſort of univerſal genius, or one who is equally and indifferently turned toward ſeveral different profeſſions and arts, is not likely to excel in any. Although there may be ſome few exceptions, yet in general it holds, that when the bent of the mind is wholly directed towards ſome one object, excluſive, in a

manner, of others, there is the faireſt proſpect of eminence in that, whatever it be. The rays muſt converge to a point, in order to glow intenſely. This remark I here chuſe to make, on account of its great importance to young people; in leading them to examine with care, and to purſue with ardor, the current and pointing of nature towards thoſe exertions of genius in which they are moſt likely to excel.

A genius for any of the fine arts, as I before obſerved, always ſuppoſes taſte; and it is clear, that the improvement of taſte will ſerve both to forward and to correct the operations of genius. In proportion as the taſte of a poet, or orator, becomes more refined with reſpect to the beauties of compoſition, it will certainly aſſiſt him to produce the more finiſhed beauties in his work. Genius, however, in a poet or orator, may ſometimes exiſt in a higher degree than taſte; that is, genius may be bold and ſtrong, when taſte is neither very delicate, nor very correct. This is often the caſe in the infancy of arts; a period, when genius frequently exerts itſelf with great vigor, and executes with much warmth; while taſte, which requires experience, and improves by ſlower degrees, hath not yet attained its full growth. Homer and Shakſpeare are proofs of what I now aſſert; in whoſe admirable writings are found inſtances of rudeneſs and indelicacy, which the more refined taſte of later writers, who had far inferior genius to them, would have taught them

them to avoid. As all human perfection is limited, this may very probably be the law of our nature, that it is not given to one man to execute with vigor and fire, and, at the ſame time, to attend to all the leſſer and more refined graces that belong to the exact perfection of his work: While, on the other hand, a thorough taſte for thoſe inferior graces, is, for the moſt part, accompanied with a diminution of ſublimity and force.

Having thus explained the nature of taſte, the nature and importance of criticiſm, and the diſtinction between taſte and genius; I am now to enter on conſidering the ſources of the pleaſures of taſte. Here opens a very extenſive field; no leſs than all the pleaſures of the imagination, as they are commonly called, whether afforded us by natural objects, or by the imitations and deſcriptions of them. But it is not neceſſary to the purpoſe of my lectures, that all theſe ſhould be examined fully; the pleaſure which we receive from diſcourſe, or writing, being the main object of them. All that I purpoſe is, to give ſome openings into the pleaſures of taſte in general; and to inſiſt, more particularly, upon ſublimity and beauty.

We are far from having yet attained to any ſyſtem concerning this ſubject. Mr. Addiſon was the firſt who attempted a regular inquiry, in his Eſſay on the Pleaſures of the Imagination, publiſhed in the ſixth volume of the Spectator. He has reduced theſe pleaſures under three

heads; beauty, grandeur, and novelty. His ſpeculations on this ſubject, if not exceedingly profound, are, however, very beautiful and entertaining; and he has the merit of having opened a track, which was before unbeaten. The advances made ſince his time in this curious part of philoſophical criticiſm, are not very conſiderable; though ſome ingenious writers have purſued the ſubject. This is owing, doubtleſs, to that thinneſs and ſubtility which are found to be properties of all the feelings of taſte. They are engaging objects; but when we would lay firm hold of them, and ſubject them to a regular diſcuſſion, they are always ready to elude our graſp. It is difficult to make a full enumeration of the ſeveral objects that give pleaſure to taſte; it is more difficult to define all thoſe which have been diſcovered, and to reduce them under proper claſſes; and, when we would go farther, and inveſtigate the efficient cauſes of the pleaſure which we receive from ſuch objects, here, above all, we find ourſelves at a loſs. For inſtance; we all learn by experience, that certain figures of bodies appear to us more beautiful than others. On inquiring farther, we find that the regularity of ſome figures, and the graceful variety of others, are the foundation of the beauty which we diſcern in them; but when we attempt to go a ſtep beyond this, and inquire what is the cauſe of regularity and variety producing in our minds the ſenſation of beauty, any reaſon we can aſſign is extremely

imperfect. Thoſe firſt principles of internal ſenſation, nature ſeems to have covered with an impenetrable veil.

It is ſome comfort, however, that although the efficient cauſe be obſcure, the final cauſe of thoſe ſenſations lies in many caſes more open: And, in entering on this ſubject, we cannot avoid taking notice of the ſtrong impreſſion which the powers of taſte and imagination are calculated to give us of the benignity of our creator. By endowing us with ſuch powers, he hath widely enlarged the ſphere of the pleaſures of human life; and thoſe, too, of a kind the moſt pure and innocent. The neceſſary purpoſes of life might have been abundantly anſwered, though our ſenſes of ſeeing and hearing had only ſerved to diſtinguiſh external objects, without conveying to us any of thoſe refined and delicate ſenſations of beauty and grandeur, with which we are now ſo much delighted. This additional embelliſhment and glory, which, for promoting our entertainment, the author of nature hath poured forth upon his works, is one ſtriking teſtimony, among many others, of benevolence and goodneſs. This thought, which Mr. Addiſon firſt ſtarted, Dr. Akenſide, in his poem on the Pleaſures of the Imagination, has happily purſued.

——— Not content
With every food of life to nouriſh man,
By kind illuſions of the wondering ſenſe,

Thou mak'ſt all nature, beauty to his eye,
Or muſic to his ear. ———

I ſhall begin with conſidering the pleaſure which ariſes from ſublimity or grandeur, of which I propoſe to treat at ſome length; both, as this has a character more preciſe and diſtinctly marked, than any other, of the pleaſures of the imagination, and as it coincides more directly with our main ſubject. For the greater diſtinctneſs I ſhall, firſt, treat of the grandeur or ſublimity of external objects themſelves, which will employ the reſt of this lecture; and, afterwards, of the deſcription of ſuch objects, or, of what is called the ſublime in writing, which ſhall be the ſubject of a following lecture. I diſtinguiſh theſe two things from one another, the grandeur of the objects themſelves when they are preſented to the eye, and the deſcription of that grandeur in diſcourſe or writing; though moſt critics, inaccurately I think, blend them together; and I conſider grandeur and ſublimity as terms ſynonymous, or nearly ſo. If there be any diſtinction between them, it ariſes from ſublimity's expreſſing grandeur in its higheſt degree *.

It is not eaſy to deſcribe, in words, the preciſe impreſſion which great and ſublime

* See a Philoſophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. Dr. Gerard on Taſte, Section II. Elements of Criticiſm, Chap. IV.

objects make upon us, when we behold them; but every one has a conception of it. It conſiſts in a kind of admiration and expanſion of the mind; it raiſes the mind much above its ordinary ſtate; and fills it with a degree of wonder and aſtoniſhment, which it cannot well expreſs. The emotion is certainly delightful; but is altogether of the ſerious kind: a degree of awfulneſs and ſolemnity, even approaching to ſeverity, commonly attends it when at its height; very diſtinguiſhable from the more gay and briſk emotion raiſed by beautiful objects.

The ſimpleſt form of external grandeur appears in the vaſt and boundleſs proſpects preſented to us by nature; ſuch as wide extended plains, to which the eye can ſee no limits; the firmament of heaven; or the boundleſs expanſe of the ocean. All vaſtneſs produces the impreſſion of ſublimity. It is to be remarked, however, that ſpace, extended in length, makes not ſo ſtrong an impreſſion as height or depth. Though a boundleſs plain be a grand object, yet a high mountain, to which we look up, or an awful precipice or tower, whence we look down on the objects which lie below, is ſtill more ſo. The exceſſive grandeur of the firmament ariſes from its height, joined to its boundleſs extent; and that of the ocean, not from its extent alone, but from the perpetual motion and irreſiſtible force of that maſs of waters. Wherever ſpace is concerned, it is clear, that amplitude or greatneſs of extent, in one dimenſion

or other, is neceſſary to grandeur. Remove all bounds from any object, and you preſently render it ſublime. Hence infinite ſpace, endleſs numbers, and eternal duration, fill the mind with great ideas.

From this ſome have imagined, that vaſtneſs, or amplitude of extent, is the foundation of all ſublimity. But I cannot be of this opinion, becauſe many objects appear ſublime which have no relation to ſpace at all. Such, for inſtance, is great loudneſs of ſound. The burſt of thunder or of cannon, the roaring of winds, the ſhouting of multitudes, the ſound of vaſt cataracts of water, are all inconteſtibly grand objects. "I heard the voice of a great "multitude, as the ſound of many waters, and "of mighty thunderings, ſaying Allelujah." In general we may obſerve, that great power and force exerted, always raiſe ſublime ideas: and perhaps the moſt copious ſource of theſe is derived from this quarter. Hence the grandeur of earthquakes and burning mountains; of great conflagrations; of the ſtormy ocean, and overflowing waters; of tempeſts of wind; of thunder and lightning; and of all the uncommon violence of the elements. Nothing is more ſublime than mighty power and ſtrength. A ſtream that runs within its banks, is a beautiful object; but when it ruſhes down with the impetuoſity and noiſe of a torrent, it preſently becomes a ſublime one. From lions, and other animals of ſtrength, are drawn ſublime compariſons in poets,

A race-horſe is looked upon with pleaſure; but it is the war-horſe, "whoſe neck is clothed "with thunder;" that carries grandeur in its idea. The engagement of two great armies, as it is the higheſt exertion of human might, combines a variety of ſources of the ſublime; and has accordingly been always conſidered as one of the moſt ſtriking and magnificent ſpectacles that can be either preſented to the eye, or exhibited to the imagination in deſcription.

For the farther illuſtration of this ſubject, it is proper to remark, that all ideas of the ſolemn and awful kind, and even bordering on the terrible, tend greatly to aſſiſt the ſublime; ſuch as darkneſs, ſolitude, and ſilence. What are the ſcenes of nature that elevate the mind in the higheſt degree, and produce the ſublime ſenſation? Not the gay landſcape, the flowery field, or the flouriſhing city; but the hoary mountain, and the ſolitary lake; the aged foreſt, and the torrent falling over the rock. Hence too, night-ſcenes are commonly the moſt ſublime. The firmament when filled with ſtars, ſcattered in ſuch vaſt numbers, and with ſuch magnificent profuſion, ſtrikes the imagination with a more awful grandeur, than when we view it enlightened by all the ſplendor of the ſun. The deep ſound of a great bell, or the ſtriking of a great clock, are at any time grand; but, when heard amid the ſilence and ſtillneſs of the night, they become doubly ſo. Darkneſs is very commonly applied for adding

ſublimity to all our ideas of the deity. "He "maketh darkneſs his pavilion; he dwelleth in "the thick cloud." So Milton,

——— How oft, amidſt
Thick clouds and dark, does heav'n's all-ruling fire
Chuſe to reſide, his glory unobſcured,
And, with the majeſty of darkneſs round
Covers his throne ——— BOOK II. 263.

Obſerve, with how much art Virgil has introduced all thoſe ideas of ſilence, vacuity, and darkneſs, when he is going to introduce his hero to the infernal regions, and to diſcloſe the ſecrets of the great deep.

Dii quibus imperium eſt animarum, umbræque
ſilentes,
Et Chaos, & Phlegethon, loca nocte ſilentia late,
Sit mihi fas audita loqui; ſit numine veſtro
Pandere res alta terra, & caligine merſas.
Ibant obſcuri, ſola ſub nocte, per umbram,
Perque domos Ditis vacuos, & inania regna;
Quale per incertam lunam, ſub luce maligna
Eſt iter in ſylvis ——— *.

* Ye ſubterranean gods, whoſe awful ſway
The gliding ghoſts and ſilent ſhades obey;
O Chaos, hear! and Phlegethon profound!
Whoſe ſolemn empire ſtretches wide around!
Give me, ye great tremendous powers! to tell
Of ſcenes and wonders in the depths of hell;

Theſe paſſages I quote at preſent, not ſo much as inſtances of ſublime writing, though in themſelves they truly are ſo, as to ſhow, by the effect of them, that the objects which they preſent to us, belong to the claſs of ſublime ones.

Obſcurity, we are farther to remark, is not unfavorable to the ſublime. Though it render the object indiſtinct, the impreſſion, however, may be great; for, as an ingenious Author has well obſerved, it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination; and the imagination may be ſtrongly affected; and, in fact, often is ſo, by objects of which we have no clear conception. Thus we ſee, that almoſt all the deſcriptions given us of the appearances of ſupernatural beings, carry ſome ſublimity, though the conceptions which they afford us be confuſed and indiſtinct. Their ſublimity ariſes from the ideas, which they always convey, of ſuperior power and might, joined with an awful obſcurity. We may ſee this fully exemplified in the following noble paſſage of the book of Job. "In thoughts from "the viſions of the night, when deep ſleep "falleth upon men, fear came upon me, and

Give me your mighty ſecrets to diſplay,
From thoſe black realms of darkneſs to the day.
PITT.

Obſcure they went; through dreary ſhades, that led
Along the waſte dominions of the dead
As wander travellers in woods by night,
By the moon's doubtful and malignant light.
DRYDEN.

" trembling which made all my bones to ſhake. " Then a ſpirit paſſed before my face; the hair " of my fleſh ſtood up: it ſtood ſtill; but I could " not diſcern the form thereof; an image was " before mine eyes; there was ſilence: and I " heard a voice —— ſhall mortal man be more " juſt than god *?" (Job, iv. 15.) No ideas, it is plain, are ſo ſublime as thoſe taken from the Supreme Being; the moſt unknown, but the greateſt of all objects; the infinity of whoſe nature, and the eternity of whoſe duration, joined with the omnipotence of his power, though they ſurpaſs our conceptions, yet exalt them to the higheſt. In general, all objects that are greatly raiſed above us, or far removed from us, either in ſpace or in time, are apt to ſtrike us as great. Our viewing them, as through the midſt of diſtance or antiquity, is favorable to the impreſſions of their ſublimity.

As obſcurity, ſo diſorder too, is very compatible with grandeur; nay, frequently heightens

* The picture which Lucretius has drawn of the dominion of ſuperſtition over mankind, repreſenting it as a portendous ſpectre showing its head from the clouds, and diſmaying the whole human race with its countenance, together with the magnanimity of Epicurus in raiſing himſelf up againſt it, carries all the grandeur of a ſublime, obſcure, and awful image.

Humana ante oculos fœde cum vita jaceret
In terris, oppreſſa gravi ſub religione,
Quæ caput a cœli regionibus oſtendebat,
Horribili ſuper aſpectu mortalibus inſtans,
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Eſt oculos auſus. —— LIB. I.

it. Few things that are ſtrictly regular, and methodical, appear ſublime. We ſee the limits on every ſide; we feel ourſelves confined; there is no room for the mind's exerting any great effort. Exact proportion of parts, though it enters often into the beautiful, is much diſregarded in the ſublime. A great maſs of rocks, thrown together by the hand of nature with wildneſs and confuſion, ſtrike the mind with more grandeur, than if they had been adjuſted to each other with the moſt accurate ſymmetry.

In the feeble attempts, which human art can make towards producing grand objects (feeble, I mean, in compariſon with the powers of nature), greatneſs of dimenſions always conſtitutes a principal part. No pile of building can convey any idea of ſublimity, unleſs it be ample and lofty. There is, too, in architecture, what is called greatneſs of manner; which ſeems chiefly to ariſe, from preſenting the object to us in one full point of view; ſo that it ſhall make its impreſſion whole, entire, and undivided, upon the mind. A Gothic cathedral raiſes ideas of grandeur in our minds, by its ſize, its height, its awful obſcurity, its ſtrength, its antiquity, and its durability.

There ſtill remains to be mentioned one claſs of ſublime objects; what may be called the moral, or ſentimental ſublime; ariſing from exertions of the human mind; from certain affections, and actions, of our fellow-creatures. Theſe will be found to be all, or chiefly, of

that claſs, which comes under the name of magnanimity or heroiſm; and they produce an effect extremely ſimilar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature; filling the mind with admiration, and elevating it above itſelf. A noted inſtance of this, quoted by all the French critics, is the celebrated *Qu'il mourût* of Corneille, in the tragedy of Horace. In the famous combat betwixt the Horatii and the Curiatii, the old Horatius, being informed, that two of his ſons are ſlain, and that the third had betaken himſelf to flight, at firſt will not believe the report; but being thoroughly aſſured of the fact, is fired with all the ſentiments of high honor and indignation at this ſuppoſed unworthy behaviour of his ſurviving ſon. He is reminded, that this ſon ſtood alone againſt three, and aſked what he would have had him to have done? — "To have died, — he anſwers. In the ſame manner Porus, taken priſoner by Alexander, after a gallant defence, and aſked in what manner he would be treated? anſwering, "Like a "king;" and Cæſar chiding the pilot who was afraid to ſet out with him in a ſtorm, "Quid "times? Cæſarem vehis;" are good inſtances of this ſentimental ſublime. Wherever, in ſome critical and high ſituation, we behold a man uncommonly intrepid, and reſting upon himſelf; ſuperior to paſſion and to fear; animated by ſome great principle to the contempt of popular opinions, of ſelfiſh intereſt, of dangers, or of

death; there we are ſtruck with a ſenſe of the ſublime *.

High virtue is the moſt natural and fertile ſource of this moral ſublimity. However, on ſome occaſions, where virtue either has no place, or is but imperfectly diſplayed, yet if extraordinary vigor and force of mind be diſcovered, we are not inſenſible to a degree of grandeur in the character; and from the ſplendid conqueror, or the daring conſpirator, whom we are far from approving, we cannot with-hold our admiration **.

* The ſublime, in natural and in moral objects, is brought before us in one view, and compared together, in the following beautiful paſſage of Akenſide's Pleaſures of the Imagination.

Look then abroad through nature; to the range
Of planets, ſuns, and adamantine ſpheres,
Wheeling, unſhaken, thro' the void immenſe;
And ſpeak, O man! does this capacious ſcene,
With half that kindling majeſty, dilate
Thy ſtrong conception, as when Brutus roſe,
Refulgent, from the ſtroke of Cæſar's fate,
Amid the crowd of patriots; and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove,
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and ſhook his crimſon ſteel,
And bade the father of his country hail!
For lo! the tyrant proſtrate on the duſt;
And Rome again is free. BOOK I.

** Silius Italicus has ſtudied to give an auguſt idea of Hannibal, by repreſenting him as ſurrounded with all his victories, in the place of guards. One who had formed a deſign of aſſaſſinating him in the midſt of a feaſt, is thus addreſſed:

I have now enumerated a variety of inſtances, both in inanimate objects and in human life, wherein the ſublime appears. In all theſe inſtances, the emotion raiſed in us is of the ſame kind, although the objects that produce the emotion be of widely different kinds. A queſtion next ariſes, whether we are able to diſcover ſome one fundamental quality in which all theſe different objects agree, and which is the cauſe of their producing an emotion of the ſame nature in our minds? Various hypotheſes have been formed concerning this; but, as far as appears to me, hitherto unſatisfactory. Some have imagined that amplitude, or great extent, joined with ſimplicity, is either immediately, or remotely, the fundamental quality of whatever is ſublime; but we have ſeen that amplitude is

> Fallit te, menſas inter quod credis inermem;
> Tot bellis quæſita viro, tot cædibus, armat
> Majeſtas æterna ducem. Si admoveris ora
> Cannas, & Trebiam ante oculos, Traſymenaque buſta,
> Et Pauli ſtare ingentem miraberis umbram.

A thought ſomewhat of the ſame nature occurs in a French author, "Il ſe cache; mais ſa réputation le découvre: Il "marche ſans ſuite & ſans équipage; mais chacun, dans ſon "eſprit, le met ſur un char de triomphe. On compte en le "voyant, les ennemis qu'il a vaincus, non pas les ſerviteurs "qui le ſuivent. Tout ſeul qu'il eſt, on ſe figure, autour de "lui, ſes vertus, & ſes victoires qui l'accompagnent. Moins "il eſt ſuperbe, plus il devient vénérable." Oraiſon funèbre de M. de Turenne, par M. Fléchier—Both theſe paſſages are ſplendid, rather than ſublime. In the firſt there is a want of juſtneſs in the thought; in the ſecond, of ſimplicity in the expreſſion.

confined to one ſpecies of ſublime objects; and cannot, without violent ſtraining, be applied to them all. The author of "a Philoſophical Inquiry "into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime "and Beautiful," to whom we are indebted for ſeveral ingenious and original thoughts upon this ſubject, propoſes a formal theory upon this foundation, that terror is the ſource of the ſublime, and that no objects have this character, but ſuch as produce impreſſions of pain and danger. It is indeed true, that many terrible objects are highly ſublime; and that grandeur does not refuſe an alliance with the idea of danger. But though this is very properly illuſtrated by the author (many of whoſe ſentiments on that head I have adopted), yet he ſeems to ſtretch his theory too far, when he repreſents the ſublime as conſiſting wholly in modes of danger, or of pain. For the proper ſenſation of ſublimity, appears to be very diſtinguiſhable from the ſenſation of either of thoſe; and, on ſeveral occaſions, to be entirely ſeparated from them. In many grand objects, there is no coincidence with terror at all; as in the magnificent proſpect of wide extended plains, and of the ſtarry firmament; or in the moral diſpoſitions and ſentiments, which we view with high admiration; and in many painful and terrible objects alſo, it is clear, there is no ſort of grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a ſnake, are exceedingly terrible; but are deſtitute of all claim whatever to ſublimity. I am

inclined to think, that mighty force or power, whether accompanied with terror or not, whether employed in protecting, or in alarming us, has a better title, than any thing that has yet been mentioned, to be the fundamental quality of the ſublime; as, after the review which we have taken, there does not occur to me any ſublime object, into the idea of which, power, ſtrength, and force, either enter not directly, or are not, at leaſt, intimately aſſociated with the idea, by leading our thoughts to ſome aſtoniſhing power, as concerned in the production of the object. However, I do not inſiſt upon this as ſufficient to found a general theory: it is enough, now, to have given this view of the nature and different kinds of ſublime objects, by which I hope to have laid a proper foundation for diſcuſſing, with greater accuracy, the ſublime in writing and compoſition.

LEC-

LECTURE IV.

The Sublime in Writing.

HAVING treated of grandeur or ſublimity in external objects, the way ſeems now to be cleared, for treating, with more advantage, of the deſcription of ſuch objects; or, of what is called the ſublime in writing. Though it may appear early to enter on the conſideration of this ſubject; yet, as the ſublime is a ſpecies of writing which depends leſs than any other on the artificial embelliſhments of rhetoric, it may be examined with as much propriety here, as in any ſubſequent part of theſe lectures.

Many critical terms have unfortunately been employed, in a ſenſe too looſe and vague; none more ſo, than that of the ſublime. Every one is acquainted with the character of Cæſar's Commentaries, and of the ſtyle in which they are written; a ſtyle remarkably pure, ſimple, and elegant; but the moſt remote from the ſublime, of any of the claſſical authors. Yet this author has a German critic, Johannes Guliel-mus Bergerus, who wrote no longer ago than

the year 1720, pitched upon him as the perfect model of the ſublime, and has compoſed a quarto volume, entitled, *de naturali pulchritudine Orationis;* the expreſs intention of which, is to ſhow, that Cæſar's Commentaries contain the moſt complete exemplification of all Longinus's rules relating to ſublime writing. This I mention as a ſtrong proof of the confuſed ideas which have prevailed, concerning this ſubject. The true ſenſe of ſublime writing, undoubtedly, is ſuch a deſcription of objects, or exhibition of ſentiments, which are in themſelves of a ſublime nature, as ſhall give us ſtrong impreſſions of them. But there is another very indefinite, and therefore very improper, ſenſe, which has been too often put upon it; when it is applied to ſignify any remarkable and diſtinguiſhing excellency of compoſition; whether it raiſe in us the ideas of grandeur, or thoſe of gentleneſs, elegance, or any other ſort of beauty. In this ſenſe, Cæſar's Commentaries may, indeed, be termed ſublime, and ſo may many ſonnets, paſtorals, and love elegies, as well as Homer's Iliad. But this evidently confounds the uſe of words; and marks no one ſpecies, or character, of compoſition whatever.

I am ſorry to be obliged to obſerve, that the ſublime is too often uſed in this laſt and improper ſenſe, by the celebrated critic Longinus, in his treatiſe on this ſubject. He ſets out, indeed, with deſcribing it in its juſt and proper meaning; as ſomething that elevates the mind

above itſelf, and fills it with high conceptions, and a noble pride. But from this view of it he frequently departs; and ſubſtitutes in the place of it, whatever, in any ſtrain of compoſition, pleaſes highly. Thus, many of the paſſages which he produces as inſtances of the ſublime, are merely elegant, without having the moſt diſtant relation to proper ſublimity; witneſs Sappho's famous ode, on which he deſcants at conſiderable length. He points out five ſources of the ſublime. The firſt is, boldneſs or grandeur in the thoughts; the ſecond is, the pathetic; the third, the proper application of figures; the fourth, the uſe of tropes and beautiful expreſſions; the fifth, muſical ſtructure and arrangement of words. This is the plan of one who was writing a treatiſe of rhetoric, or of the beauties of writing in general; not of the ſublime in particular. For of theſe five heads, only the two firſt have any peculiar relation to the ſublime; boldneſs and grandeur in the thoughts, and, in ſome inſtances, the pathetic, or ſtrong exertions of paſſion: the other three, tropes, figures, and muſical arrangement, have no more relation to the ſublime, than to other kinds of good writing; perhaps leſs to the ſublime than to any other ſpecies whatever; becauſe it requires leſs the aſſiſtance of ornament. From this it appears, that clear and preciſe ideas on this head are not to be expected from that writer. I would not, however, be underſtood, as if I meant, by this cenſure, to

repreſent his treatiſe as of ſmall value. I know no critic, ancient or modern, that diſcovers a more lively reliſh of the beauties of fine writing, than Longinus; and he has alſo the merit of being himſelf an excellent, and, in ſeveral paſſages, a truly ſublime, writer. But, as his work has been generally conſidered as a ſtandard on this ſubject, it was incumbent on me to give my opinion concerning the benefit to be derived from it. It deſerves to be conſulted, not ſo much for diſtinct inſtruction concerning the ſublime, as for excellent general ideas concerning beauty in writing.

I return now to the proper and natural idea of the ſublime in compoſition. The foundation of it muſt always be laid in the nature of the objects deſcribed. Unleſs it be ſuch an object as, if preſented to our eyes, if exhibited to us in reality, would raiſe ideas of that elevating, that awful, and magnificent kind, which we call ſublime; the deſcription, however finely drawn, is not entitled to come under this claſs. This excludes all objects that are merely beautiful, gay, or elegant. In the next place, the object muſt not only, in itſelf, be ſublime, but it muſt be ſet before us in ſuch a light as is moſt proper to give us a clear and full impreſſion of it; it muſt be deſcribed with ſtrength, with conciſeneſs, and ſimplicity. This depends, principally, upon the lively impreſſion which the poet, or orator has of the object which he exhibits; and upon his being deeply affected, and warmed, by the

ſublime idea which he would convey. If his own feeling be languid, he can never inſpire us with any ſtrong emotion. Inſtances, which are extremely neceſſary on this ſubject, will clearly ſhow the importance of all thoſe requiſites which I have juſt now mentioned.

It is, generally ſpeaking, among the moſt ancient authors, that we are to look for the moſt ſtriking inſtances of the ſublime. I am inclined to think, that the early ages of the world, and the rude unimproved ſtate of ſociety, are peculiarly favorable to the ſtrong emotions of ſublimity. The genius of men is then much turned to admiration and aſtoniſhment. Meeting with many objects, to them new and ſtrange, their imagination is kept glowing, and their paſſions are often raiſed to the utmoſt. They think, and expreſs themſelves boldly, and without reſtraint. In the progreſs of ſociety the genius and manners of men undergo a change more favorable to accuracy, than to ſtrength or ſublimity.

Of all writings, ancient or modern, the ſacred ſcriptures afford us the higheſt inſtances of the ſublime. The deſcriptions of the Deity, in them, are wonderfully, noble; both from the grandeur of the object, and the manner of repreſenting it. What an aſſemblage, for inſtance, of awful and ſublime ideas is preſented to us, in that paſſage of the XVIIIth Pſalm, where an appearance of the almighty is deſcribed? "In "my diſtreſs I called upon the Lord, he heard "my voice out of his temple, and my cry came

"before him. Then, the earth ſhook and trem-
"bled: the foundations alſo of the hills were
"moved; becauſe he was wroth. He bowed
"the heavens, and came down, and darkneſs
"was under his feet; and he did ride upon
"a Cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon
"the wings of the wind. He made darkneſs
"his ſecret place; his pavilions round about
"him were dark waters, and thick clouds of
"the ſky." Here, agreeably to the principles eſtabliſhed in the laſt lecture, we ſee, with what propriety and ſucceſs the circumſtances of darkneſs and terror are applied for heightening the ſublime. So, alſo, the prophet Habakkuk, in a ſimilar paſſage: "He ſtood, and meaſured the earth;
"he beheld, and drove aſunder the nations. The
"everlaſting mountains were ſcattered; the per-
"petual hills did bow; his ways are everlaſting.
"The mountains ſaw thee; and they trembled.
"The overflowing of the water paſſed by. The
"deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands
"on high."

The noted inſtance, given by Longinus, from Moſes, "God ſaid, let there be light, and there
"was light," is not liable to the cenſure which I paſſed on ſome of his inſtances, of being foreign to the ſubject. It belongs to the true ſublime; and the ſublimity of it ariſes from the ſtrong conception it gives, of an exertion of power producing its effect with the utmoſt ſpeed and facility. A thought of the ſame kind is magnificently amplified in the following paſſage of Iſaiah (chap. xxiv. 24. 27, 28.):

" Thus ſaith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he " that formed thee from the womb: I am the " Lord that maketh all things, that ſtretcheth " forth the heavens alone, that ſpreadeth abroad " the earth by myſelf—that ſaith to the deep, be " dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that ſaith " of Cyrus, he is my ſhepherd, and ſhall per- " form all my pleaſure; even, ſaying to Jeruſa- " lem, thou ſhalt be built; and to the tem- " ple, thy foundation ſhall be laid." There is a paſſage in the Pſalms, which deſerves to be mentioned under this head: " God," ſays the Pſalmiſt, " ſtilleth the noiſe of the ſeas, the noiſe " of their waves, and the tumults of the people." The joining together two ſuch grand objects, as the ragings of the waters, and the tumults of the people, between which there is ſo much reſemblance as to form a very natural aſſociation in the fancy, and the repreſenting them both as ſubject, at one moment, to the command of God, produces a noble effect.

Homer is a poet, who, in all ages, and by all critics, has been greatly admired for ſublimity; and he owes much of his grandeur to that native and unaffected ſimplicity which characterizes his manner. His deſcriptions of hoſts engaging; the animation, the fire, and rapidity, which he throws into his battles, preſent to every reader of the Iliad, frequent inſtances of ſublime writing. His introduction of the gods, tends often to heighten, in a high degree, the majeſty of his warlike ſcenes. Hence Longinus beſtows

ſuch high and juſt commendations on that paſſage, in the XVth book of the Iliad, where Neptune, when preparing to iſſue forth into the engagement, is deſcribed as ſhaking the mountains with his ſteps, and driving his chariot along the ocean. Minerva, arming herſelf for fight in the Vth book; and Apollo, in the XVth, leading on the Trojans, and flaſhing terror with his Ægis on the face of the Greeks, are ſimilar inſtances of great ſublimity added to the deſcription of battles, by the appearances of thoſe celeſtial beings. In the XXth book, where all the gods take part in the engagement, according as they ſeverally favor either the Grecians, or the Trojans, the poet ſeems to put forth one of his higheſt efforts, and the deſcription riſes into the moſt awful magnificence. All nature is repreſented as in commotion; Jupiter thunders in the heavens; Neptune ſtrikes the earth with his trident; the ſhips, the city, and the mountains ſhake; the earth trembles to its centre; Pluto ſtarts from his throne, in dread leſt the ſecrets of the infernal region ſhould be laid open to the view of mortals. The paſſage is worthy of being inſerted.

Αὐταὰρ ἐπεὶ μεῖ' ὅμιλον Ὀλύμπιοι ἤλυθον ἀνδρῶν,
Ὦρτο δ' Ἔρις κρατερὴ, λαοσσόος αὖε δ' Ἀθήνη, —
Αὖε δ' Ἄρης ἐτέρωθεν, ἐρεμνῇ λαίλαπι ἶσος, —
Ὣς τὰς ἀμφοτέρῃσι μάκαρες θεοὶ ὀτρύνοντες,
Σύμβαλον, ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς ἔριδα ῥήγνυντο βαρεῖαν·
Δεινὸν δ' ἐβρόντησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε
Ὑψόθεν· αὐταὰρ ἔνερθε Ποσειδάων ἐτίναξε
Γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην, ὀρέων τ' αἰπεινὰ κάρηνα.

Πάντες δ' ἐσσείοντο πόδες πολυπιδάκος Ἴδης,
Καὶ κορυφαὶ, Τρώων τε πόλις, καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.
Ἔδδεισεν δ' ὑπένερθεν ἄναξ ἐνέρων, Ἀϊδωνεὺς,
Δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἆλτο, καὶ ἴαχε· μή οἱ ὑπερθε
Γαῖαν ἀναρρήξειε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων,
Οἰκία δὲ θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι φανείη
Σμερδαλέ', εὐρώεντα, τά τε στυγέουσι θεοί περ·
Τόσσος ἄρα κτύπος ὦρτο θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνιόντων *.

Iliad, 20. 47. &c.

The works of Oſſian (as I have elſewhere ſhown) abound with examples of the ſublime. The ſubjects of that author, and the manner in which he writes, are particularly favorable to it. He poſſeſſes all the plain and venerable manner of the ancient times. He deals in no ſuperfluous or gaudy ornaments; but throws forth his images with a rapid conciſeneſs, which enables them to ſtrike the mind with the greateſt force. Among poets of more poliſhed times, we are to look for the graces of correct writing, for juſt proportion of parts, and ſkilfully conducted narration. In the midſt of ſmiling ſcenery and pleaſurable themes, the gay and the beautiful will appear, undoubtedly, to more advantage.

* But when the powers deſcending ſwelled the fight,
Then tumult roſe, fierce rage, and pale affright;
Now through the trembling ſhores Minerva calls,
And now ſhe thunders from the Grecian walls.
Mars, hov'ring o'er his Troy, his terror ſhrouds
In gloomy tempeſts, and a night of clouds;
Now through each Trojan heart he fury pours,
With voice divine, from Ilion's topmoſt towers——
Above, the Sire of Gods his thunder rolls,
And peals on peals redoubled rend the poles;

But amidſt the rude ſcenes of nature and of ſociety, ſuch as Oſſian deſcribes; amidſt rocks, and torrents, and whirlwinds, and battles, dwells the ſublime; and naturally aſſociates itſelf with that grave and ſolemn ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes the author of Fingal. "As autumn's dark ſtorms pour from two "echoing hills, ſo toward each other approached "the heroes. As two dark ſtreams from high rocks "meet and mix, and roar on the plain; loud, "rough, and dark, in battle, met Lochlin and "Inisfail: chief mixed his ſtrokes with chief, and "man with man. Steel clanging ſounded on ſteel. "Helmets are cleft on high; blood burſts, and "ſmokes around. As the troubled noiſe of the "ocean when roll the waves on high; as the laſt "peal of the thunder of heaven; ſuch is the noiſe "of battle. The groan of the people ſpread over "the hills. It was like the thunder of night,

Beneath, ſtern Neptune ſhakes the ſolid ground,
The foreſts wave, the mountains nod around;
Through all her ſummits tremble Ida's woods,
And from their ſources boil her hundred floods:
Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain,
And the toſs'd navies beat the heaving main:
Deep in the diſmal region of the dead,
Th'infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,
Leapt from his throne, leſt Neptune's arm ſhould lay
His dark dominions open to the day;
And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,
Abhorr'd by men, and dreadful ev'n to Gods.
Such wars th'immortals wage; ſuch horrors rend
The world's vaſt concave, when the Gods contend.

POPE.

" when the cloud burſts on Cona, and a thouſand " ghoſts ſhriek at once on the hollow wind." Never were images of more awful ſublimity employed to heighteen the terror of battle.

I have produced theſe inſtances, in order to demonſtrate how eſſential conciſeneſs and ſimplicity are to ſublime writing. Simplicity, I place in oppoſition to ſtudied and profuſe ornament; and conciſeneſs, to ſuperfluous expreſſion. The reaſon why a defect, either in conciſeneſs or ſimplicity, is hurtful in a peculiar manner to the ſublime, I ſhall endeavour to explain. The emotion occaſioned in the mind by ſome great or noble object, raiſes it conſiderably above its ordinary pitch. A ſort of enthuſiaſm is produced, extremely agreeable while it laſts; but from which the mind is tending every moment to fall down into its ordinary ſituation. Now, when an author has brought us, or is attempting to bring us, into this ſtate; if he multiplies words unneceſſarily, if he decks the ſublime object which he preſents to us, round and round, with glittering ornaments; nay, if he throws in any one decoration that ſinks in the leaſt below the capital image, that moment he alters the key; he relaxes the tenſion of the mind; the ſtrength of the feeling is emaſculated; the beautiful may remain, but the ſublime is gone.—When Julius Cæſar ſaid to the pilot who was afraid to put to ſea with him in a ſtorm, " Quid times? Cæſarem " vehis;" we are ſtruck with the daring magnanimity of one relying with ſuch confidence on

his cauſe and his fortune. Theſe few words convey every thing neceſſary to give us the impreſſion full. Lucan reſolved to amplify and adorn the thought. Obſerve how every time he twiſts it round, it departs farther from the ſublime, till it end at laſt in tumid declamation.

Sperne minas, inquit, pelagi, ventoque furenti
Trade ſinum Italiam ſi cœlo auctore, recuſas,
Me, pete. Sola tibi cauſa hæc eſt juſta timoris
Vectorem non noſſe tuum; quem numina nunquam
Deſtituunt; de quo male tunc Fortuna meretur,
Cum poſt vota venit. Medias perrumpe procellas,
Tutela ſecure mea. Cœli iſte fretique,
Non puppis noſtræ, labor eſt. Hanc Cæſare preſſam,
A fluctu defendet onus; nam proderit undis
Iſte ratis. ——— Quid tanta ſtrage paretur
Ignoras? quærit pelagi, cœlique tumultu
Quid præſtet fortuna mihi. *. ——— PHARS. V. 578.

On account of the great importance of

* But Cæſar ſtill ſuperior to diſtreſs,
Fearleſs and confident of ſure ſucceſs,
Thus to the pilot loud: ——— The ſeas deſpiſe,
And the vain threat'ning of the noiſy skies;
Though Gods deny thee yon Auſonian ſtrand,
Yet go, I charge you, go, at my command,
Thy ignorance alone can cauſe thy fears,
Thou know'ſt not what a freight thy veſſel bears:
Thou know'ſt not I am he to whom 'tis given,
Never to want the care of watchful heaven.
Obedient fortune waits my humble thrall,
And always ready, comes before I call.
Let winds, and ſeas, loud wars at freedom wage,
And waſte upon themſelves their empty rage,

ſimplicity and conciſeneſs, I conceive rhyme, in Engliſh verſe, to be, if not inconſiſtent with the ſublime, at leaſt very unfavorable to it. The conſtrained elegance of this kind of verſe, and ſtudied ſmoothneſs of the ſounds, anſwering regularly to each other at the end of the line, though they be quite conſiſtent with gentle emotions, yet weaken the native force of ſublimity; beſides, that the ſuperfluous words which the poet is often obliged to introduce, in order to fill up the rhyme, tend farther to enfeeble it. Homer's deſcription of the nod of Jupiter, as ſhaking the heavens, has been admired, in all ages, as highly ſublime. Literally tranſlated, it runs thus: "He ſpoke, and bending his ſable brows, gave the awful nod; while "he ſhook the celeſtial locks of his immortal "head, all Olympus was ſhaken." Mr. Pope tranſlates it thus:

He ſpoke; and awful bends his ſable brows,
Shakes his ambroſial curls, and gives the nod,
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of a God.
High heaven with trembling the dread ſignal took,
And all Olympus to its centre ſhook.

A ſtronger, mightier Demon is thy friend,
Thou, and thy bark, on Cæſar's fate depend.
Thou ſtand'ſt amaz'd to view this dreadful ſcene,
And wonder'ſt what the Gods and Fortune mean,
But artfully their bounties thus they raiſe,
And from my danger arrogate new praiſe:
Amidſt the fears of death they bid me live,
And ſtill enhance what they are ſure to give.

Rowe.

The image is ſpread out, and attempted to be beautified; but it is, in truth, weakened. The third line—"The ſtamp of fate, and ſanc-"tion of a God," is merely expletive, and introduced for no other reaſon but to fill up the rhyme; for it interrupts the deſcription, and clogs the image. For the ſame reaſon, out of mere compliance with the rhyme, Jupiter is repreſented as ſhaking his locks before he gives the nod,—"Shakes his ambroſial curls, and "gives the nod," which is trifling, and without meaning. Whereas, in the original, the hair of his head ſhaken, is the effect of his nod, and makes a happy picturesque circumſtance in the deſcription *.

The boldneſs, freedom, and variety of our blank verſe, is infinitely more favorable than rhyme, to all kinds of ſublime poetry. The fulleſt proof of this is afforded by Milton; an author, whoſe genius led him eminently to the ſublime. The whole firſt and ſecond books of Paradiſe Loſt, are continued inſtances of it. Take only, for an example, the following noted deſcription of Satan, after his fall, appearing at the head of the infernal hoſts:

——— He, above the reſt,
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had not yet loſt

* See Webb, on the Beauties of Poetry.

All her original brightneſs, nor appeared
Leſs than archangel ruined; and the exceſs
Of glory obſcured: As when the ſun, new riſen,
Looks through the horizontal miſty air,
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind, the moon,
In dim eclipſe, diſaſtrous twilight ſheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd ſo, yet ſhone
Above them all th' Archangel.———

Here concur a variety of ſources of the Sublime: The principal object eminently great; a high ſuperior nature, fallen indeed, but erecting itſelf againſt diſtreſs; the grandeur of the principal object heightened, by aſſociating it with ſo noble an idea as that of the ſun ſuffering an eclipſe; this picture ſhaded with all thoſe images of change and trouble, of darkneſs and terror, which coincide ſo finely with the ſublime emotion; and the whole expreſſed in a ſtyle and verſification, eaſy, natural, and ſimple, but magnificent.

I have ſpoken of ſimplicity and conciſeneſs, as eſſential to ſublime writing. In my general deſcription of it, I mentioned ſtrength, as another neceſſary requiſite. The ſtrength of deſcription ariſes, in a great meaſure, from a ſimple conciſeneſs; but, it ſuppoſes alſo ſomething more; namely, a proper choice of circumſtances in the deſcription, ſo as to exhibit the object in its full and moſt ſtriking point of view. For every object

has ſeveral faces, ſo to ſpeak, by which it may be preſented to us, according to the circumſtances with which we ſurround it; and it will appear eminently ſublime, or not, in proportion as all theſe circumſtances are happily choſen, and of a ſublime kind. Here lies the great art of the writer; and indeed, the great difficulty of ſublime deſcription. If the deſcription be too general, and diveſted of circumſtances, the object appears in a faint light; it makes a feeble impreſſion, or no impreſſion at all, on the reader. At the ſame time, if any trivial or improper circumſtances are mingled, the whole is degraded.

A ſtorm or tempeſt, for inſtance, is a ſublime object in nature. But, to render it ſublime in deſcription, it is not enough, either to give us mere general expreſſions concerning the violence of the tempeſt, or to deſcribe its common, vulgar effects, in overthrowing trees and houſes. It muſt be painted with ſuch circumſtances as fill the mind with great and awful ideas. This is very happily done by Virgil in the following paſſage:

Ipſe pater, media nimborum in nocte, coruſca
Fulmina molitur dextra, quo maxima motu
Terra tremit; fugere feræ; & mortalia corda,
Per gentes humilis ſtravit pavor: Ille, flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit *. ——— GEORG. I.

* The Father of the Gods his glory ſhrouds,

Every

Every circumſtance in this noble deſcription is the production of an imagination heated and aſtoniſhed with the grandeur of the object. If there be any defect, it is in the words immediately following thoſe I have quoted; "Ingeminant "Auſtri, & denſiſſimus imber;" where the tranſition is made too haſtily, I am afraid, from the preceding ſublime images, to a thick ſhower, and the blowing of the ſouth wind; and ſhows how difficult it frequently is, to deſcend with grace, without ſeeming to fall.

The high importance of the rule which I have been now giving, concerning the proper choice of circumſtances, when deſcription is meant to be ſublime, ſeems to me not to have been ſufficiently attended to. It has, however, ſuch a foundation in nature, as renders the leaſt deflection from it fatal. When a writer is aiming at the beautiful only, his deſcriptions may have improprieties in them, and yet be beautiful ſtill. Some trivial, or misjudged circumſtances, can be overlooked

Involv'd in tempeſts, and a night of clouds;
And from the middle darkneſs flashing out,
By fits he deals his fiery bolts about.
Earth feels the motions of her angry God,
Her entrails tremble, and her mountains nod;
And flying beaſts in foreſts ſeek abode.
Deep horror ſeizes every human breaſt;
Their pride is humbled, and their fears confeſt;
While he, from high his rolling thunders throws,
And fires the mountains with repeated blows;
The rocks are from their old foundations rent;
The winds redouble, and the rains augment.

DRYDEN.

by the reader, they make only the difference of more or leſs; the gay, or pleaſing emotion, which he has raiſed, ſubſiſts ſtill. But the caſe is quite different with the ſublime. There, one trifling circumſtance, one mean idea, is ſufficient to deſtroy the whole charm. This is owing to the nature of the emotion aimed at by ſublime deſcription, which admits of no mediocrity, and cannot ſubſiſt in a middle ſtate; but muſt either highly tranſport us, or, if unſucceſsful in the execution, leave us greatly diſguſted, and diſpleaſed: We attempt to riſe along with the writer; the imagination is awakened, and put upon the ſtretch; but it requires to be ſupported; and if, in the midſt of its effort, you deſert it unexpectedly, down it comes with a painful ſhock. When Milton, in his battle of the angels, deſcribes them as tearing up the mountains, and throwing them at one another; there are, in his deſcription, as Mr. Addiſon has obſerved, no circumſtances but what are properly ſublime:

From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,
They pluck'd the ſeated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods; and by the ſhaggy tops
Up-lifting, bore them in their hands. ——

Whereas Claudian, in a fragment upon the war of the giants, has contrived to render this idea of their throwing the mountains, which is in itſelf ſo grand, burleſque and ridiculous; by this ſingle circumſtance, of one of his giants with the mountain Ida upon his ſhoulders, and a river,

which flowed from the mountain, running down along the giants back, as he held it up in that poſture. There is a deſcription too in Virgil, which I think, is cenſurable though more ſlightly, in this reſpect. It is that of the burning mountain Ætna; a ſubject certainly very proper to be worked up by a poet into a ſublime deſcription:

——— Horrificis juxta tonat Ætna ruinis,
Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem,
Turbine fumantem piceo, & candente favilla;
Adtollitque globos flammarum, & ſidera lambit:
Interdum ſcopulos, avolſaque viſcera montis
Erigit eructans, liquefactaque ſaxa ſub auras
Cum gemitu glomerat, fundoque exæſtuat imo *.

ÆN. III. 571.

Here, after ſeveral magnificent images, the Poet concludes with perſonifying the mountain under this figure, "eructans viſcera cum gemitu," belching up its bowels with a groan; which, by likening the mountain to a ſick, or drunk perſon, degrades the majeſty of the deſcription. It is to no purpoſe to tell us, that the poet here alludes to the fable of the giant Enceladus lying under mount Ætna; and that he ſuppoſes his motions and toſſings to have occaſioned the fiery eruptions. He intended the deſcription of a ſublime object; and the natural ideas, raiſed by a burning mountain, are infinitely more lofty, than the belchings of any giant, how huge ſoever.

* The port capacious, and ſecure from wind,
Is to the foot of thundering Ætna joined,

The debaſing effect of the idea which is here preſented, will appear in a ſtronger light, by ſeeing what figure it makes in a poem of Sir Richard Blackmore's, who, through a monſtrous perverſity of taſte, had choſen this for the capital circumſtance in his deſcription, and thereby (as Dr. Arbuthnot humorouſly obſerves, in his treatiſe on the Art of Sinking) had repreſented the mountain as in a fit of the cholic.

Ætna, and all the burning mountains find
Their kindled ſtores with inbred ſtorms of wind
Blown up to rage, and roaring out complain,
As torn with inward gripes and torturing pain;
Laboring, they caſt their dreadful vomit round,
And with their melted bowels ſpread the ground.

Such inſtances ſhow how much the ſublime depends upon a juſt ſelection of circumſtances; and with how great care every circumſtance muſt be avoided, which, by bordering in the leaſt upon the mean, or even upon the gay or the trifling, alters the tone of the emotion.

By turns a pitchy cloud she rolls on high,
By turns hot embers from her entrails fly,
And flakes of mounting flames that lick the sky.
Oft from her bowels maſſy rocks are thrown,
And shivered by the force, come piece-meal down.
Oft liquid lakes of burning ſulphur flow,
Fed from the fiery ſprings that boil below.

DRYDEN.

In this translation of Dryden's, the debaſing circumſtance to which I object in the original, is, with propriety, omitted.

If it ſhall be inquired, What are the proper ſources of the ſublime? My anſwer is, that they are to be looked for every where in nature. It is not by hunting after tropes, and figures, and rhetorical aſſiſtances, that we can expect to produce it. No: it ſtands clear, for the moſt part, of theſe labored refinements of art. It muſt come unſought, if it come at all; and be the natural offspring of a ſtrong imagination.

Eſt Deus in nobis; agitante caleſcimus illo.

Wherever a great and awful object is preſented in nature, or a very magnanimous and exalted affection of the human mind is diſplayed; thence, if you can catch the impreſſion ſtrongly, and exhibit it warm and glowing, you may draw the ſublime. Theſe are its only proper ſources. In judging of any ſtriking beauty in compoſition, whether it is, or is not, to be referred to this claſs, we muſt attend to the nature of the emotion which it raiſes; and only, if it be of that elevating, ſolemn, and awful kind, which diſtinguiſhes this feeling, we can pronounce it ſublime.

From the account which I have given of the nature of the ſublime, it clearly follows, that it is an emotion which can never be long protracted. The mind, by no force of genius, can be kept, for any conſiderable time, ſo far raiſed above its common tone; but will, of courſe, relax into its ordinary ſituation. Neither are the

abilities of any human writer ſufficient to ſupply a continued run of unmixed ſublime conceptions. The utmoſt we can expect is, that this fire of imagination ſhould ſometimes flaſh upon us like lightning from heaven, and then diſappear. In Homer and Milton, this effulgence of genius breaks forth more frequently, and with greater luſtre than in moſt authors. Shakſpeare alſo riſes often into the true ſublime. But no author whatever is ſublime throughout. Some, indeed, there are, who, by a ſtrength and dignity in their conceptions and a current of high ideas that runs through their whole compoſition, preſerve the reader's mind always in a tone nearly allied to the ſublime; for which reaſon they may, in a limited ſenſe, merit the name of continued ſublime writers; and, in this claſs, we may juſtly place Demoſthenes and Plato.

As for what is called the ſublime ſtyle, it is, for the moſt part, a very bad one; and has no relation whatever to the real ſublime. Perſons are apt to imagine, that magnificent words, accumulated epithets, and a certain ſwelling kind of expreſſion, by riſing above what is uſual or vulgar, contributes to, or even forms, the ſublime. Nothing can be more falſe. In all the inſtances of ſublime writing, which I have given, nothing of this kind appears: "God "ſaid, let there be light, and there was light." This is ſtriking and ſublime. But put it into what is commonly called the ſublime ſtyle: "The ſovereign arbiter of nature, by the

" potent energy of a ſingle word, commanded " the light to exiſt;" and, as Boileau has well obſerved, the ſtyle indeed is raiſed, but the thought is fallen. In general, in all good writing, the ſublime lies in the thought, not in the words; and when the thought is truly noble, it will, for the moſt part, clothe itſelf in a native dignity of language. The ſublime, indeed, rejects mean, low, or trivial expreſſions; but it is equally an enemy to ſuch as are turgid. The main ſecret of being ſublime, is to ſay great things in few and plain words. It will be found to hold, without exception, that the moſt ſublime authors are the ſimpleſt in their ſtyle; and wherever you find a writer, who affects a more than ordinary pomp and parade of words, and is always endeavouring to magnify his ſubject by epithets, there you may immediately ſuſpect, that, feeble in ſentiment, he is ſtudying to ſupport himſelf by mere expreſſion.

The ſame unfavorable judgment we muſt paſs, on all that labored apparatus with which ſome writers introduce a paſſage, or deſcription, which they intend ſhall be ſublime; calling on their readers to attend, invoking their Muſe, or breaking forth into general, unmeaning exclamations, concerning the greatneſs, terribleneſs, or majeſty of the object, which they are to deſcribe. Mr. Addiſon, in his Campaign has fallen into an error of this kind, when about to deſcribe the battle of Blenheim:

But O! my Muſe! what numbers wilt thou find
To ſing the furious troops in battle joined?
Methinks, I hear the drum's tumultuous ſound,
The victor's ſhouts, and dying groans, confound; &c.

Introductions of this kind, are a forced attempt in a writer, to ſpur up himſelf, and his reader, when he finds his imagination flagging in vigor. It is like taking artificial ſpirits in order to ſupply the want of ſuch as are natural. By this obſervation, however, I do not mean to paſs a general cenſure on Mr. Addiſon's Campaign, which, in ſeveral places, is far from wanting merit; and in particular, the noted compariſon of his hero to the angel who rides in the whirlwind and directs the ſtorm, is a truly ſublime image.

The faults oppoſite to the ſublime are chiefly two; the frigid, and the bombaſt. The frigid conſiſts, in degrading an object, or ſentiment, which is ſublime in itſelf, by our mean conception of it; or by our weak, low, and childiſh deſcription of it. This betrays entire abſence, or at leaſt great poverty of genius. Of this, there are abundance of examples, and theſe commented upon with much humor, in the treatiſe on the Art of Sinking, in Dean Swift's works; the inſtances taken chiefly from Sir Richard Blackmore. One of theſe, I had occaſion already to give, in relation to mount Ætna, and it were needleſs to produce any more. The bombaſt lies, in forcing an ordinary or trivial object out of its rank, and endeavouring to raiſe it into the ſublime;

or, in attempting to exalt a ſublime object beyond all natural and reaſonable bounds. Into this error, which is but too common, writers of genius may ſometimes fall, by unluckily loſing ſight of the true point of the ſublime. This is alſo called fuſtian, or rant. Shakſpeare, a great, but incorrect genius, is not unexceptionable here. Dryden and Lee, in their tragedies, abound with it.

Thus far of the ſublime; of which I have treated fully, becauſe it is ſo capital an excellency in fine writing, and becauſe clear and preciſe ideas on this head are, as far as I know, not to be met with in critical writers.

Before concluding this lecture, there is one obſervation which I chuſe to make at this time; I ſhall make it once for all, and hope it will be afterwards remembered. It is with reſpect to the inſtances of faults, or rather blemiſhes and imperfections, which, as I have done in this lecture, I ſhall hereafter continue to take, when I can, from writers of reputation. I have not the leaſt intention thereby to diſparage their character in the general. I ſhall have other occaſions of doing equal juſtice to their beauties. But it is no reflection on any human performance, that it is not abſolutely perfect. The taſk would be much eaſier for me, to collect inſtances of faults from bad writers. But they would draw no attention, when quoted from books which nobody reads. And I conceive,

that the method which I follow, will contribute more to make the beſt authors be read with pleaſure, when one properly diſtinguiſhes their beauties from their faults; and is led to imitate and admire only what is worthy of imitation and admiration.

LECTURE V.

Beauty, and other Pleaſures of Taſte.

AS ſublimity conſtitutes a particular character of compoſition, and forms one of the higheſt excellencies of eloquence and of poetry, it was proper to treat of it at ſome length. It will not be neceſſary to diſcuſs ſo particularly all the other pleaſures that ariſe from taſte, as ſome of them have leſs relation to our main ſubject. On beauty only I ſhall make ſeveral obſervations, both as the ſubject is curious, and as it tends to improve taſte, and to diſcover the foundation of ſeveral of the graces of deſcription and of poetry *.

Beauty next to ſublimity, affords, beyond doubt, the higheſt pleaſure to the imagination.

* See Hutchinſon's Inquiry concerning Beauty and Virtue. — Gerard on Taſte, chap. iii. —Inquiry into the Origin of the Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. — Elements of Criticiſm, chap. iii. — Spectator, vol. vi. Eſſay on the Pleaſures of Taſte.

The emotion which it raiſes, is very diſtinguiſhable from that of ſublimity. It is of a calmer kind; more gentle and ſoothing; does not elevate the mind ſo much, but produces an agreeable ſerenity. Sublimity raiſes a feeling, too violent, as I ſhowed, to be laſting; the pleaſure ariſing from beauty admits of longer continuance. It extends alſo to a much greater variety of objects than ſublimity; to a variety indeed ſo great, that the feelings which beautiful objects produce, differ conſiderably, not in degree only, but alſo in kind, from one another. Hence, no word in the language is uſed in a more vague ſignification than beauty. It is applied to almoſt every external object that pleaſes the eye, or the ear; to a great number of the graces of writing; to many diſpoſitions of the mind; nay, to ſeveral objects of mere abſtract ſcience. We talk currently of a beautiful tree or flower; a beautiful poem; a beautiful character, and a beautiful theorem in mathematics.

Hence we may eaſily perceive, that, among ſo great a variety of objects, to find out ſome one quality in which they all agree, and which is the foundation of that agreeable ſenſation they all raiſe, muſt be a very difficult, if not, more probably, a vain attempt. Objects, denominated beautiful, are ſo different, as to pleaſe, not in virtue of any one quality common to them all, but by means of ſeveral different principles in human nature. The agreeable emotion which they all raiſe, is ſomewhat of the ſame nature;

and therefore, has the common name of beauty given to it; but it is raiſed by different cauſes.

Hypotheſes, however, have been framed by ingenious men, for aſſigning the fundamental quality of beauty in all objects. In particular, uniformity amidſt variety, has been inſiſted on as this fundamental quality. For the beauty of many figures, I admit that this accounts in a ſatisfying manner. But when we endeavour to apply this principle to beautiful objects of ſome other kind, as to color for inſtance, or motion, we ſhall ſoon find that it has no place. And even in external figured objects, it does not hold, that their beauty is in proportion to their mixture of variety with uniformity; ſeeing many pleaſe us as highly beautiful, which have almoſt no variety at all; and others, which are various to a degree of intricacy. Laying ſyſtems of this kind, therefore, aſide, what I now propoſe is, to give an enumeration of ſeveral of thoſe claſſes of objects in which beauty moſt remarkably appears; and to point out, as far as I can, the ſeparate principles of beauty in each of them.

Color affords, perhaps, the ſimpleſt inſtance of beauty, and therefore the fitteſt to begin with. Here, neither variety, nor uniformity, nor any other principle that I know, can be aſſigned, as the foundation of beauty. We can refer it to no other cauſe but the ſtructure of the eye, which determines us to receive certain modifications of the rays of light with more pleaſure than others. And we ſee accordingly,

that, as the organ of ſenſation varies in different perſons, they have their different favorite colors. It is probable, that aſſociation of ideas has influence, in ſome caſes, on the pleaſure which we receive from colors. Green, for inſtance, may appear more beautiful, by being connected in our ideas with rural proſpects and ſcenes; white, with innocence; blue, with the ſerenity of the ſky. Independent of aſſociations of this kind, all that we can farther obſerve concerning colors is, that thoſe choſen for beauty are, generally, delicate, rather than glaring. Such are thoſe paintings with which nature hath ornamented ſome of her works, and which art ſtrives in vain to imitate; as the feathers of ſeveral kinds of birds, the leaves of flowers, and the fine variation of colors exhibited by the ſky at the riſing and ſetting of the ſun. Theſe preſent to us the higheſt inſtances of the beauty of coloring; and have accordingly been the favorite ſubjects of poetical deſcription in all countries.

From color we proceed to figure, which opens to us forms of beauty more complex and diverſified. Regularity firſt occurs to be noticed as a ſource of beauty. By a regular figure, is meant, one which we perceive to be formed according to ſome certain rule, and not left arbitrary, or looſe, in the conſtruction of its parts. Thus, a circle, a ſquare, a triangle, or a hexagon, pleaſe the eye, by their regularity, as beautiful figures. We muſt not, however, conclude,

that all figures pleaſe in proportion to their regularity; or that regularity is the ſole, or the chief, foundation of beauty in figure. On the contrary, a certain graceful variety is found to be a much more powerful principle of beauty; and is therefore ſtudied a great deal more than regularity, in all works that are deſigned merely to pleaſe the eye. I am, indeed, inclined to think, that regularity appears beautiful to us chiefly, if not only, on account of its ſuggeſting the ideas of fitneſs, propriety, and uſe, which have always a greater connexion with orderly and proportioned forms, than with thoſe which appear not conſtructed according to any certain rule. It is clear, that nature, who is undoubtedly the moſt graceful artiſt, hath, in all her ornamental works, purſued variety, with an apparent neglect of regularity. Cabinets, doors, and windows, are made after a regular form, in cubes and parallelograms, with exact proportion of parts; and by being ſo formed they pleaſe the eye; for this good reaſon, that being works of uſe, they are, by ſuch figures, the better ſuited to the ends for which they were deſigned. But plants, flowers, and leaves are full of variety and diverſity. A ſtraight canal is an inſipid figure, in compariſon of the meanders of rivers. Cones and pyramids are beautiful; but trees growing in their natural wildneſs are infinitely more beautiful than when trimmed into pyramids and cones. The apartments of a houſe muſt be regular in their diſpoſition for the conveniency of its inhabitants; but

a garden, which is deſigned merely for beauty, would be exceedingly diſguſting, if it had as much uniformity and order in its parts as a dwelling houſe.

Mr. Hogarth, in his Analyſis of Beauty, has obſerved, that figures bounded by curve lines are, in general, more beautiful than thoſe bounded by ſtraight lines and angles. He pitches upon two lines, on which, according to him, the beauty of figure principally depends; and he has illuſtrated, and ſupported his doctrine, by a ſurpriſing number of inſtances. The one is the waving line, or a curve bending backwards and forwards, ſomewhat in the form of the letter S. This he calls the line of beauty, and ſhows how often it is found in ſhells, flowers and ſuch other ornamental works of nature; as it is common alſo in the figures deſigned by painters and ſculptors, for the purpoſe of decoration. The other line, which he calls the line of grace, is the former waving curve, twiſted round ſome ſolid body. The curling worm of a common jack is one of the inſtances he gives of it. Twiſted pillars, and twiſted horns, alſo exhibit it. In all the inſtances which he mentions, variety plainly appears to be ſo material a principle of beauty, that he ſeems not to err much when he defines the art of drawing pleaſing forms, to be the art of varying well. For the curve line, ſo much the favorite of painters, derives, according to him, its chief advantage, from its

perpetual

perpetual bending and variation from the ſtiff regularity of the ſtraight line.

Motion furniſhes another ſource of beauty, diſtinct from figure. Motion of itſelf is pleaſing; and bodies in motion are, "cæteris paribus," preferred to thoſe in reſt. It is, however, only gentle motion that belongs to the beautiful; for when it is very ſwift, or very forcible, ſuch as that of a torrent, it partakes of the ſublime. The motion of a bird gliding through the air, is extremely beautiful; the ſwiftneſs with which lightning darts through the heavens, is magnificent and aſtoniſhing. And here, it is proper to obſerve, that the ſenſations of ſublime and beautiful are not always diſtinguiſhed by very diſtant boundaries; but are capable, in ſeveral inſtances, of approaching towards each other. Thus, a ſmooth running ſtream, is one of the moſt beautiful objects in nature: as it ſwells gradually into a great river, the beautiful, by degrees, is loſt in the ſublime. A young tree is a beautiful object; a ſpreading ancient oak, is a venerable and a grand one. The calmneſs of a fine morning is beautiful; the univerſal ſtillneſs of the evening is highly ſublime. But to return to the beauty of motion, it will be found, I think, to hold very generally, that motion in a ſtraight line is not ſo beautiful as in an undulating waving direction; and motion upwards is, commonly too, more agreeable than motion downwards. The eaſy curling motion of flame and ſmoke is to be inſtanced, as an object ſingularly agreeable: and here Mr. Hogarth's

waving line recurs upon us as a principle of beauty. That artiſt obſerves very ingeniouſly, that all the common and neceſſary motions for the buſineſs of life, are performed by men in ſtraight or plain lines; but that all the graceful and ornamental movements are made in waving lines: an obſervation not unworthy of being attended to, by all who ſtudy the grace of geſture and action.

Though color, figure, and motion, be ſeparate principles of beauty; yet in many beautiful objects they all meet, and thereby render the beauty both greater, and more complex. Thus, in flowers, trees, animals, we are entertained at once with the delicacy of the color, with the gracefulneſs of the figure, and ſometimes alſo with the motion of the object. Although each of theſe produce a ſeparate agreeable ſenſation, yet they are of ſuch a ſimilar nature, as readily to mix and blend in one general perception of beauty, which we aſcribe to the whole object as its cauſe: For beauty is always conceived by us as ſomething reſiding in the object which raiſes the pleaſant ſenſation; a ſort of glory which dwells upon, and inveſts it. Perhaps the moſt complete aſſemblage of beautiful objects that can any where be found, is preſented by a rich natural landſcape, where there is ſufficient variety of objects: fields in verdure, ſcattered trees and flowers, running water, and animals grazing. If to theſe be joined, ſome of the productions of art, which ſuit ſuch a ſcene; as a bridge with

arches over a river, ſmoke riſing from cottages in the midſt of trees, and the diſtant view of a fine building ſeen by the riſing ſun; we then enjoy, in the higheſt perfection, that gay, cheerful, and placid ſenſation which characterizes beauty. To have an eye and a taſte formed for catching the peculiar beauties of ſuch ſcenes as theſe, is a neceſſary requiſite for all who attempt poetical deſcription.

The beauty of the human countenance is more complex than any that we have yet conſidered. It includes the beauty of color, ariſing from the delicate ſhades of the complexion; and the beauty of figure, ariſing from the lines which form the different features of the face. But the chief beauty of the countenance depends upon a myſterious expreſſion, which it conveys of the qualities of the mind; of good ſenſe, or good humor; of ſprightlineſs, candor, benevolence, ſenſibility, or other amiable diſpoſitions. How it comes to paſs, that a certain conformation of features is connected in our idea with certain moral qualities; whether we are thought by inſtinct, or by experience, to form this connexion, and to read the mind in the countenance, belongs not to us now to inquire, nor is indeed eaſy to reſolve. The fact is certain, and acknowledged, that what gives the human countenance its moſt diſtinguiſhing beauty; is what is called its expreſſion; or an image, which it is conceived to ſhow of internal moral diſpoſitions.

This leads to obſerve, that there are certain qualities of the mind which, whether expreſſed in the countenance, or by words, or by actions, always raiſe in us a feeling ſimilar to that of beauty. There are two great claſſes of moral qualities; one is of the high and the great virtues, which require extraordinary efforts, and turn upon dangers and ſufferings; as heroiſm, magnanimity, contempt of pleaſures, and contempt of death. Theſe, as I have obſerved in a former lecture, excite in the ſpectator an emotion of ſublimity and grandeur. The other claſs is generally of the ſocial virtues, and ſuch as are of a ſofter and gentler kind; as compaſſion, mildneſs, friendſhip, and generoſity. Theſe raiſe in the beholder a ſenſation of pleaſure, ſo much akin to that produced by beautiful external objects, that, though of a more dignified nature, it may, without impropriety, be claſſed under the ſame head.

A ſpecies of beauty, diſtinct from any I have yet mentioned, ariſes from deſign or art; or, in other words, from the perception of means being adapted to an end; or the parts of any thing being well fitted to anſwer the deſign of the whole. When, in conſidering the ſtructure of a tree or a plant, we obſerve, how all the parts, the root, the ſtem, the bark, and the leaves, are ſuited to the growth and nutriment of the whole: much more when we ſurvey all the parts and members of a living animal; or when we examine any of the curious works of art; ſuch as

a clock, a ſhip, or any nice machine; the pleaſure which we have in the ſurvey, is wholly founded on this ſenſe of beauty. It is altogether different from the perception of beauty produced by color, figure, variety, or any of the cauſes formerly mentioned. When I look at a watch, for inſtance, the caſe of it, if finely engraved, and of curious workmanſhip, ſtrikes me as beautiful in the former ſenſe; bright color, exquiſite poliſh, figures finely raiſed and turned. But when I examine the conſtruction of the ſpring and the wheels, and praiſe the beauty of the internal machinery; my pleaſure then ariſes wholly from the view of that admirable art, with which ſo many various and complicated parts are made to unite for one purpoſe.

This ſenſe of beauty, in fitneſs and deſign, has an extenſive influence over many of our ideas. It is the foundation of the beauty which we diſcover in the proportion of doors, windows, arches, pillars, and all the orders of architecture. Let the ornaments of a building be ever ſo fine and elegant in themſelves, yet if they interfere with this ſenſe of fitneſs and deſign, they loſe their beauty, and hurt the eye, like diſagreeable objects. Twiſted columns, for inſtance, are undoubtedly ornamental; but as they have an appearance of weakneſs, they always diſpleaſe when they are made uſe of to ſupport any part of a building that is maſſy, and that ſeemed to require a more ſubſtantial prop. We cannot look upon any work whatever without

being led, by a natural aſſociation of ideas, to think of its end and deſign, and of courſe to examine the propriety of its parts, in relation to this deſign and end. When their propriety is clearly diſcerned, the work ſeems always to have ſome beauty; but when there is a total want of propriety, it never fails of appearing deformed. Our ſenſe of fitneſs and deſign, therefore, is ſo powerful, and holds ſo high a rank among our perceptions, as to regulate, in a great meaſure, our other ideas of beauty: An obſervation which I the rather make, as it is of the utmoſt importance, that all who ſtudy compoſition ſhould carefully attend to it. For, in an epic poem, a hiſtory, an oration, or any work of genius, we always require as we do in other works, a fitneſs, or adjuſtment of means, to the end which the author is ſuppoſed to have in view. Let his deſcription be ever ſo rich, or his figures ever ſo elegant, yet, if they are out of place, if they are not proper parts of that whole, if they ſuit not the main deſign, they loſe all their beauty; nay, from beauties they are converted into deformities. Such power has our ſenſe of fitneſs and congruity, to produce a total transformation of an object whoſe appearance otherwiſe would have been beautiful.

After having mentioned ſo many various ſpecies of beauty, it now only remains to take notice of beauty as it is applied to writing or diſcourſe; a term commonly uſed in a ſenſe altogether looſe and undetermined. For it is

applied to all that pleaſes, either in ſtyle or in ſentiment, from whatever principle that pleaſure flows; and a beautiful poem or oration means, in common language, no other than a good one, or one well compoſed. In this ſenſe, it is plain, the word is altogether indefinite, and points at no particular ſpecies or kind of beauty. There is, however, another ſenſe, ſomewhat more definite, in which beauty of writing characterizes a particular manner; when it is uſed to ſignify a certain grace and amenity in the turn either of ſtyle or ſentiment, for which ſome authors have been peculiarly diſtinguiſhed. In this ſenſe, it denotes a manner neither remarkably ſublime, nor vehemently paſſionate, nor uncommonly ſparkling; but ſuch as raiſes in the reader an emotion of the gentle placid kind, ſimilar to what is raiſed by the contemplation of beautiful objects in nature; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it very much, but diffuſes over the imagination an agreeable and pleaſing ſerenity. Mr. Addiſon is a writer altogether of this character; and is one of the moſt proper and preciſe examples that can be given of it. Fenelon, the author of the Adventures of Telemachus, may be given as another example. Virgil too, though very capable of riſing on occaſions into the ſublime, yet, in his general manner, is diſtinguiſhed by the character of beauty and grace rather than of ſublimity. Among orators, Cicero has more of the beautiful than

Demoſthenes, whoſe genius led him wholly towards vehemence and ſtrength.

Thus much it is ſufficient to have ſaid upon the ſubject of beauty. We have traced it through a variety of forms; as next to ſublimity, it is the moſt copious ſource of the pleaſures of taſte; and as the conſideration of the different appearances, and principles of beauty, tends to the improvement of taſte in many ſubjects.

But it is only by appearing under the forms of ſublime or beautiful, that objects delight the imagination. From ſeveral other principles alſo, they derive their power of giving it pleaſure.

Novelty, for inſtance, has been mentioned by Mr. Addiſon, and by every writer on this ſubject. An object which has no merit to recommend it, except its being uncommon or new, by means of this quality alone, produces in the mind a vivid and an agreeable emotion. Hence that paſſion of curioſity, which prevails ſo generally among mankind. Objects and ideas which have been long familiar, make too faint an impreſſion to give an agreeable exerciſe to our faculties. New and ſtrange objects rouſe the mind from its dormant ſtate, by giving it a quick and pleaſing impulſe. Hence, in a great meaſure, the entertainment afforded us by fiction and romance. The emotion raiſed by novelty is of a more lively and pungent nature, than that produced by beauty; but much ſhorter in its continuance. For if the object have in itſelf no

charms to hold our attention, the ſhining gloſs thrown upon it by novelty ſoon wears off.

Beſides novelty, imitation is another ſource of pleaſure to taſte. This gives riſe to what Mr. Addiſon terms, the ſecondary pleaſures of imagination; which form, doubtleſs, a very extenſive claſs. For all imitation affords ſome pleaſure; not only the imitation of beautiful or great objects, by recalling the original ideas of beauty or grandeur which ſuch objects themſelves exhibited; but even objects which have neither beauty nor grandeur, nay, ſome which are terrible or deformed, pleaſe us in a ſecondary or repreſented view.

The pleaſures of melody and harmony belong alſo to taſte. There is no agreeable ſenſation we receive, either from beauty or ſublimity, but what is capable of being heightened by the power of muſical ſound. Hence the delight of poetical numbers; and even of the more concealed and looſer meaſures of proſe. Wit, humor, and ridicule likewiſe open a variety of pleaſures to taſte, quite diſtinct from any that we have yet conſidered.

At preſent it is not neceſſary to purſue any farther the ſubject of the pleaſures of taſte. I have opened ſome of the general principles; it is time now to make the application to our chief ſubject. If the queſtion be put, To what claſs of thoſe pleaſures of taſte which I have enumerated, that pleaſure is to be referred, which we receive from poetry, eloquence, or

fine writing? My anſwer is, not to any one, but to them all. This ſingular advantage, writing and diſcourſe poſſeſs, that they encompaſs ſo large and rich a field on all ſides, and have power to exhibit, in great perfection, not a ſingle ſet of objects only, but almoſt the whole of thoſe which give pleaſure to taſte and imagination; whether that pleaſure ariſe from ſublimity, from beauty in its different forms, from deſign and art, from moral ſentiment, from novelty, from harmony, from wit, humor and ridicule. To whichſoever of theſe the peculiar bent of a perſon's taſte lies, from ſome writer or other, he has it always in his power to receive the gratification of it.

Now this high power which eloquence and poetry poſſeſs, of ſupplying taſte and imagination with ſuch a wide circle of pleaſures, they derive altogether from their having a greater capacity of imitation and deſcription than is poſſeſſed by any other art. Of all the means which human ingenuity has contrived for recalling the images of real objects, and awakening, by repreſentation, ſimilar emotions to thoſe which are raiſed by the original, none is ſo full and extenſive as that which is executed by words and writing. Through the aſſiſtance of this happy invention, there is nothing, either in the natural or moral world, but what can be repreſented and ſet before the mind, in colors very ſtrong and lively. Hence it is uſual among critical writers, to ſpeak of diſcourſe as the

chief of all the imitative or mimetic arts; they compare it with painting and with ſculpture, and in many reſpects prefer it juſtly before them.

This ſtyle was firſt introduced by Ariſtotle in his poetics; and ſince his time, has acquired a general currency among modern authors. But, as it is of conſequence to introduce as much preciſion as poſſible into critical language, I muſt obſerve, that this manner of ſpeaking is not accurate. Neither diſcourſe in general, nor poetry in particular, can be called altogether imitative arts. We muſt diſtinguiſh betwixt imitation and deſcription, which are ideas that ſhould not be confounded. Imitation is performed by means of ſomewhat that has a natural likeneſs and reſemblance to the thing imitated, and of conſequence is underſtood by all; ſuch are ſtatues and pictures. Deſcription, again, is the raiſing in the mind the conception of an object by means of ſome arbitrary or inſtituted ſymbols, underſtood only by thoſe who agree in the inſtitution of them; ſuch are words and writing. Words have no natural reſemblance to the ideas or objects which they are employed to ſignify; but a ſtatue or a picture has a natural likeneſs to the original. And therefore imitation and deſcription differ conſiderably in their nature from each other.

As far, indeed, as a poet or a hiſtorian introduces into his work perſons actually ſpeaking; and by the words which he puts into their mouths, repreſents the diſcourſe which they

might be ſuppoſed to hold; ſo far his art may more accurately be called imitative: and this is the caſe in all dramatic compoſition. But in narrative or deſcriptive works, it can with no propriety be called ſo. Who, for inſtance, would call Virgil's deſcription of a tempeſt, in the firſt Æneid, an imitation of a ſtorm? If we heard of the imitation of a battle, we might naturally think of ſome mock fight, or repreſentation of a battle on the ſtage, but would never apprehend, that it meant one of Homer's deſcriptions in the Iliad. I admit, at the ſame time, that imitation and deſcription agree in their principal effect, of recalling by external ſigns, the ideas of things which we do not ſee. But though in this they coincide, yet it ſhould not be forgotten, that the terms themſelves are not ſynonymous; that they import different means of effecting the ſame end; and of courſe make different impreſſions on the mind *.

* Though, in the execution of particular parts, poetry is certainly deſcriptive rather than imitative, yet there is a qualified ſenſe in which poetry, in the general, may be termed an imitative art. The ſubject of the poet (as Dr. Gerard has ſhown in the appendix to his Eſſay on Taſte) is intended to be an imitation, not of things really exiſting, but of the courſe of nature; that is, a feigned repreſentation of ſuch events, or ſuch ſcenes, as though they never had a being, yet might have exiſted; and which, therefore, by their probability, bear a reſemblance to nature. It was probably, in this ſenſe, that Ariſtotle termed poetry a mimetic art. How far either the imitation or the deſcription which poetry employs, is ſuperior to the imitative powers of painting and muſic, is well ſhown by Mr. Harris, in his treatiſe on muſic, painting, and poetry.

Whether we conſider poetry in particular, and diſcourſe in general, as imitative or deſcriptive; it is evident, that their whole power, in recalling the impreſſions of real objects, is derived from the ſignificancy of words. As their excellency flows altogether from this ſource, we muſt, in order to make way for further inquiries, begin at this fountain head. I ſhall, therefore, in the next lecture, enter upon the conſideration of language: of the origin, the progreſs, and conſtruction of which, I purpoſe to treat at ſome length.

The chief advantage which poetry, or diſcourſe in general enjoys is, that whereas, by the nature of his art, the painter is confined to the repreſentation of a ſingle moment, writing and diſcourſe can trace a tranſaction through its whole progreſs. That moment, indeed, which the painter pitches upon for the ſubject of his picture, he may be ſaid to exhibit with more advantage than the poet or the orator; inaſmuch as he ſets before us, in one view, all the minute concurrent circumſtances of the event which happen in one individual point of time, as they appear in nature; while diſcourſe is obliged to exhibit them in ſucceſſion, and by means of a detail, which is in danger of becoming tedious, in order to be clear; or if not tedious, is in danger of being obſcure. But to that point of time which he has choſen, the painter being entirely confined, he cannot exhibit various ſtages of the ſame action or event; and he is ſubject to this farther defect, that he can only exhibit objects as they appear to the eye, and can very imperfectly delineate characters and ſentiments, which are the nobleſt ſubjects of imitation or deſcription. The power of repreſenting theſe with full advantage, gives a high ſuperiority to diſcourſe and writing above all other imitative arts.

LECTURE VI.

Riſe and Progreſs of Language.

HAVING finiſhed my obſervations on the pleaſures of taſte, which were meant to be introductory to the principal ſubject of theſe lectures, I now begin to treat of language; which is the foundation of the whole power of eloquence. This will lead to a conſiderable diſcuſſion; and there are few ſubjects belonging to polite literature, which more merit ſuch a diſcuſſion. I ſhall firſt give a hiſtory of the riſe and progreſs of language in ſeveral particulars, from its early to its more advanced periods; which ſhall be followed by a ſimilar hiſtory of the riſe and progreſs of writing. I ſhall next give ſome account of the conſtruction of language, or the principles of univerſal grammar; and ſhall, laſtly, apply theſe obſervations more particularly to the Engliſh tongue *.

Language, in general, ſignifies the expreſſion of our ideas by certain articulate ſounds, which

* See Dr. Adam Smith's Diſſertation on the Formation of Languages.—Treatiſe of the Origin and Progreſs of Language,

are uſed as the ſigns of thoſe ideas. By articulate ſounds, are meant thoſe modulations of ſimple voice, or of ſound emitted from the thorax, which are formed by means of the mouth and its ſeveral organs, the teeth, the tongue, the lips, and the palate. How far there is any natural connexion between the ideas of the mind and the ſound emitted, will appear from what I am afterwards to offer. But as the natural connexion can, upon any ſyſtem, affect only a ſmall part of the fabric of language; the connexion between words and ideas may, in general, be conſidered as arbitrary and conventional, owing to the agreement of men among themſelves; the clear proof of which is, that different nations have different languages, or a different ſet of articulate ſounds, which they have choſen for communicating their ideas.

This artificial method of communicating thought, we now behold carried to the higheſt perfection. Language is become a vehicle by which the moſt delicate and refined emotions of

in 6 vols. — Harris's Hermes, or, a Philoſophical Inquiry concerning Language and Univerſal Grammar — Eſſai ſur l'Origine des Connaiſſances Humaines, par L'Abbé Condillac.— Principes de Grammaire, par du Marſais. — Grammaire Générale & Raiſonnée — Traité de la Formation Méchanique des Langues, par le Préſident de Broſſes. — Diſcours ſur l'inégalité parmi les Hommes, par Rouſſeau. — Grammaire Générale, par Beauzée. — Principes de la Traduction, par Batteux. — Warburton's Divine Legation of Moſes, vol. iii. — Sanctii Minerva, cum notis Perizonii. — Les vrais Principes de la Langue Françaiſe, par l'Abbé Girard.

one mind can be tranſmitted, or, if we may ſo ſpeak, transfuſed into another. Not only are names given to all objects around us, by which means an eaſy and ſpeedy intercourſe is carried on for providing the neceſſaries of life; but all the relations and differences among theſe objects are minutely marked, the inviſible ſentiments of the mind are deſcribed, the moſt abſtract notions and conceptions are rendered intelligible; and all the ideas which ſcience can diſcover, or imagination create, are known by their proper names. Nay, language has been carried ſo far, as to be made an inſtrument of the moſt refined luxury. Not reſting in mere perſpicuity, we require ornament alſo; not ſatisfied with having the conceptions of others made known to us, we make a farther demand, to have them ſo decked and adorned as to entertain our fancy; and this demand, it is found very poſſible to gratify. In this ſtate, we now find language. In this ſtate, it has been found among many nations for ſome thouſand years. The object is become familiar; and, like the expanſe of the firmament, and other great objects, which we are accuſtomed to behold, we behold it without wonder.

But carry your thoughts back to the firſt dawn of language among men. Reflect upon the feeble beginnings from which it muſt have ariſen, and upon the many and great obſtacles which it muſt have encountered in its progreſs; and you will find reaſon for the higheſt

aſtoniſhment

aſtoniſhment, on viewing the height which it has now attained. We admire ſeveral of the inventions of art; we plume ourſelves on ſome diſcoveries which have been made in latter ages ſerving to advance knowledge, and to render life comfortable; we ſpeak of them as the boaſt of human reaſon. But certainly no invention is entitled to any ſuch degree of admiration as that of language; which, too, muſt have been the product of the firſt and rudeſt ages, if indeed it can be conſidered as a human invention at all.

Think of the circumſtances of mankind when languages began to be formed. They were a wandering ſcattered race; no ſociety among them except families; and the family-ſociety, too, very imperfect, as their method of living by hunting or paſturage muſt have ſeparated them frequently from one another. In this ſituation, when ſo much divided, and their intercourſe ſo rare, how could any one ſet of ſounds, or words, be generally agreed on as the ſigns of their ideas? Suppoſing that a few, whom chance or neceſſity threw together, agreed by ſome means upon certain ſigns, yet by what authority could theſe be propagated among other tribes or families, ſo as to ſpread and grow up into a language? One would think, that in order to any language fixing and extending itſelf, men muſt have been previouſly gathered together in conſiderable numbers; ſociety muſt have been already far advanced; and yet, on the other hand, there ſeems to have been an abſolute neceſſity for

ech, previous to the formation of ſociety. or, by what bond could any multitude of men be kept together, or be made to join in the proſecution of any common intereſt, until once, by the intervention of ſpeech, they could communicate their wants and intentions to each other? So that, either how ſociety could form itſelf previouſly to language; or how words could riſe into a language, previouſly to ſociety formed, ſeem to be points attended with equal difficulty. And when we conſider farther, that curious analogy which prevails in the conſtruction of almoſt all languages, and that deep and ſubtile logic on which they are founded, difficulties increaſe ſo much upon us, on all hands, that there ſeems to be no ſmall reaſon for referring the firſt origin of all language to divine teaching or inſpiration.

But ſuppoſing language to have a divine original, we cannot, however, ſuppoſe, that a perfect ſyſtem of it was all at once given to man. It is much more natural to think, that God taught our firſt parents only ſuch language as ſuited their preſent occaſions; leaving them, as he did in other things to enlarge and improve it as their future neceſſities ſhould require. Conſequently, thoſe firſt rudiments of ſpeech muſt have been poor and narrow; and we are at full liberty to inquire in what manner, and by what ſteps, language advanced to the ſtate in which we now find it. The hiſtory which I am to give of this progreſs, will ſuggeſt ſeveral

things, both curious in themſelves, and uſeful in our future diſquiſitions.

If we ſhould ſuppoſe a period before any words were invented or known, it is clear, that men could have no other method of communicating to others what they felt, than by the cries of paſſion, accompanied with ſuch motions and geſtures as were farther expreſſive of paſſion. For theſe are the only ſigns which nature teaches all men, and which are underſtood by all. One who ſaw another going into ſome place where he himſelf had been frightened, or expoſed to danger, and who ſought to warn his neighbour of the danger, could contrive no other way of doing ſo, than by uttering thoſe cries, and making thoſe geſtures, which are the ſigns of fear: juſt as two men, at this day, would endeavour to make themſelves be underſtood by each other, who ſhould be thrown together on a deſolate iſland, ignorant of one another's language. Thoſe exclamations, therefore, which by grammarians are called interjections, uttered in a ſtrong and paſſionate manner, were, beyond doubt, the firſt elements or beginnings of ſpeech.

When more enlarged communication became neceſſary, and names began to be aſſigned to objects, in what manner can we ſuppoſe men to have proceeded in this aſſignation of names, or invention of words? Undoubtedly, by imitating, as much as they could, the nature of the object which they named, by the ſound of the

name which they gave to it. As a painter, who would repreſent graſs, muſt employ a green color; ſo, in the beginnings of language, one giving a name to any thing harſh or boiſterous, would of courſe employ a harſh or boiſterous ſound. He could not do otherwiſe, if he meant to excite in the hearer the idea of that thing which he ſought to name. To ſuppoſe words invented, or names given, to things, in a manner purely arbitrary, without any ground or reaſon, is to ſuppoſe an effect without a cauſe. There muſt have always been ſome motive which led to the aſſignation of one name rather than another; and we can conceive no motive which would more univerſally operate upon men in their firſt efforts towards language, than a deſire to paint by ſpeech, the objects which they named, in a manner more or leſs complete, according as the vocal organs had it in their power to effect this imitation.

Wherever objects were to be named, in which ſound, noiſe, or motion were concerned, the imitation by words was abundantly obvious. Nothing was more natural, than to imitate, by the ſound of the voice, the quality of the ſound or noiſe which any external object made; and to form its name accordingly. Thus, in all languages, we find a multitude of words that are evidently conſtructed upon this principle. A certain bird is termed the cuckoo, from the ſound which it emits. When one ſort of wind

is ſaid to *whiſtle*, and another to *roar;* when a ſerpent is ſaid to *hiſs;* a fly to *buz*, and falling timber to *craſh;* when a ſtream is ſaid to *flow*, and hail to *rattle;* the analogy between the word and the thing ſignified is plainly diſcernible.

In the names of objects which addreſs the ſight only, where neither noiſe nor motion are concerned, and ſtill more in the terms appropriated to moral ideas, this analogy appears to fail. Many learned men, however, have been of opinion, that though, in ſuch caſes, it becomes more obſcure, yet it is not altogether loſt; but that throughout the radical words of all languages, there may be traced ſome degree of correſpondence with the object ſignified. With regard to moral and intellectual ideas, they remark, that, in every language, the terms ſignificant of them, are derived from the names of ſenſible objects to which they are conceived to be analogous; and with regard to ſenſible objects pertaining merely to ſight, they remark, that their moſt diſtinguiſhing qualities have certain radical ſounds appropriated to the expreſſion of them, in a great variety of languages. Stability, for inſtance, fluidity, hollowneſs, ſmoothneſs, gentleneſs, violence, &c. they imagine to be painted by the ſound of certain letters or ſyllables, which have ſome relation to thoſe different ſtates of viſible objects, on account of an obſcure reſemblance which the organs of voice are capable of aſſuming to ſuch external qualities. By this natural mechaniſm, they imagine all

languages to have been at firſt conſtructed, and the roots of their capital words formed *.

A far as this ſyſtem is founded in truth, language appears to be not altogether arbitrary in its origin. Among the ancient ſtoic and Platonic philoſophers, it was a queſtion much agitated, "Utrum nomina rerum ſint natura, an impoſitione?" φύσει ἢ θέσει; by which they meant, whether words were merely conventional ſymbols; of the riſe of which no account could be given, except the pleaſure of the firſt inventors of

* The author, who has carried his ſpeculations on this ſubject the fartheſt, is the Préſident De Broſſes, in his "Traité "de la Formation Méchanique des Langues." Some of the radical letters or ſyllables which he ſuppoſes to carry this expreſſive power in moſt known languages are, St, to ſignify ſtability or reſt; Fl, to denote fluency; Cl, a gentle deſcent; R, what relates to rapid motion; C, to cavity or hollowneſs, &c. A century before his time, Dr. Wallis, in his Grammar of the Engliſh Language, had taken notice of theſe ſignificant roots, and repreſented it as a peculiar excellence of our tongue, that, beyond all others, it expreſſed the nature of the objects which it names, by employing ſounds ſharper, ſofter weaker, ſtronger, more obſcure, or more ſtridulous, according as the idea which is to be ſuggeſted requires. He gives various examples. Thus, words formed upon St, always denote firmneſs and ſtrength, analogous to the Latin *ſto*; as, ſtand, ſtay, ſtaff, ſtop, ſtout, ſteady, ſtake, ſtamp, ſtallion, ſtately, &c. Words beginning with Str, intimate violent force, and energy, analogous to the Greek στρωννυμι; as, ſtrive, ſtrength, ſtrike, ſtripe, ſtreſs, ſtruggle, ſtride, ſtretch, ſtrip, &c. Thr, implies forcible motion; as, throw, throb, thruſt, through, threaten, thraldom. Wr, obliquity or diſtortion; as, wry, wreſt, wreath, wreſtle, wring, wrong, wfangle, wrath,

language? or, whether there was ſome principle in nature that led to the aſſignation of particular names to particular objects; and thoſe of the Platonic ſchool favored the latter opinion *?

wrack, &c. Sw, ſilent agitation, or lateral motion; as, ſway, ſwing, ſwerve, ſweep, ſwim. Sl, a gentle fall or leſs obſervable motion; as, slide, slip, sly, slit, slow, slack, sling. Sp, diſſipation or expanſion; as, ſpread, ſprout, ſprinkle, ſplit, ſpill, ſpring. Terminations in Ash, indicate ſomething acting nimbly and sharply; as crash, gash, rash, flash, lash, slash. Terminations in Ush, ſomething acting more obtuſely and dully; as, crush, brush, hush, gush, blush. The learned author produces a great many more examples of the ſame kind, which ſeem to leave no doubt, that the analogies of ſound have had ſome influence on the formation of words. At the ſame time, in all ſpeculations of this kind, there is ſo much room for fancy to operate, that they ought to be adopted with much caution in forming any general theory.

* Vid. Plat. in Cratylo. "Nomina verbaque non poſita "fortuito, ſed quadam vi & ratione naturæ facta eſſe, P. "Nigidius in Grammaticis Commentariis docet; rem ſane in "philoſophiæ diſſertationibus celebrem. . . . . In eam rem "multa argumenta dicit, cur videri poſſint verba eſſe naturalia, "magis quam arbitraria. . . . . *Vos*, inquit, cum dicimus, "motu quodam oris conveniente, cum ipſius verbi demonſtra- "tione utimur, & labias ſenſim primores emovemus, ac ſpiri- "tum atque animam porro verſum, & ad eos quibuſcum ſer- "mocinamur intendimus. At contra cum dicimus *Nos*, neque "profuſo intentoque flatu vocis, neque projectis labiis pronun- "ciamus; ſed & ſpiritum & labias quaſi intra noſmet ipſos "coercemus. Hoc idem fit & in eo quod dicimus, *tu*, & *ego*, "& *mihi*, & *tibi*. Nam ſicuti cum adnuimus & abnuimus, "motus quidam ille vel capitis vel oculorum, a natura rei quam

This principle, however, of a natural relation between words and objects, can only be applied to language in its moſt ſimple and primitive ſtate. Though, in every tongue, ſome remains of it, as I have ſhown above, can be traced, it were utterly in vain to ſearch for it throughout the whole conſtruction of any modern language. As the multitude of terms increaſe in every nation, and the immenſe field of language is filled up, words, by a thouſand fanciful and irregular methods of derivation and compoſition, come to deviate widely from the primitive character of their roots, and to loſe all analogy or reſemblance in ſound to the things ſignified. In this ſtate we now find language. Words, as we now employ them, taken in the general, may be conſidered as ſymbols, not as imitations; as arbitrary, or inſtituted, not natural ſigns of ideas. But there can be no doubt, I think, that language, the nearer we remount to its riſe among men, will be found to partake more of a natural expreſſion. As it could be originally formed on nothing but imitation, it would, in its primitive ſtate, be more picturesque; much more barren indeed, and narrow in the circle of its terms, than now; but ſo far as it went, more expreſſive by ſound of the thing ſignified. This, then, may be aſſumed as

"ſignificat, non abhorret, ita in his vocibus quaſi geſtus quidam "oris & ſpiritus naturalis eſt. Eadem ratio eſt in Græcis quoque "vocibus quam eſſe in noſtris animadvertimus."

A. GELLIUS, Noct. Atticæ, lib. x. cap. 4.

one character of the firſt ſtate, or beginnings, of language, among every ſavage tribe.

A ſecond character of language, in its early ſtate, is drawn from the manner in which words were at firſt pronounced, or uttered, by men. Interjections, I ſhowed, or paſſionate exclamations, were the firſt elements of ſpeech. Men labored to communicate their feelings to one another, by thoſe expreſſive cries and geſtures which nature taught them. After words, or names of objects, began to be invented, this mode of ſpeaking, by natural ſigns, could not be all at once diſuſed. For language, in its infancy, muſt have been extremely barren; and there certainly was a period, among all rude nations, when converſation was carried on by a very few words, intermixed with many exclamations and earneſt geſtures. The ſmall ſtock of words which men as yet poſſeſſed, rendered thoſe helps abſolutely neceſſary for explaining their conceptions; and rude, uncultivated men, not having always at hand even the few words which they knew, would naturally labor to make themſelves underſtood, by varying their tones of voice, and accompanying their tones with the moſt ſignificant geſticulations they could make. At this day, when perſons attempt to ſpeak in any language which they poſſeſs imperfectly, they have recourſe to all theſe ſupplemental methods, in order to render themſelves more intelligible. The plan too, according to which I have ſhown, that language was originally conſtructed,

upon reſemblance or analogy, as far as was poſſible, to the thing ſignified, would naturally lead men to utter their words with more emphaſis and force, as long as language was a ſort of painting by means of ſound. For all thoſe reaſons this may be aſſumed as a principle, that the pronunciation of the earlieſt languages was accompanied with more geſticulation, and with more and greater inflections of voice, than what we now uſe; there was more action in it; and it was more upon a crying or ſinging tone.

To this manner of ſpeaking, neceſſity firſt gave riſe. But we muſt obſerve, that, after this neceſſity had, in a great meaſure, ceaſed, by language becoming, in proceſs of time, more extenſive and copious, the ancient manner of ſpeech ſtill ſubſiſted among many nations; and what had ariſen from neceſſity, continued to be uſed for ornament. Wherever there was much fire and vivacity in the genius of nations, they were naturally inclined to a mode of converſation which gratified the imagination ſo much; for, an imagination which is warm, is always prone to throw both a great deal of action, and a variety of tones, into diſcourſe. Upon this principle, Dr. Warburton accounts for ſo much ſpeaking by action, as we find among the old teſtament prophets; as when Jeremiah breaks the potter's veſſel, in ſight of the people; throws a book into the Euphrates; puts on bonds and yokes; and carries out his houſehold ſtuff; all which, he imagines, might

be ſignificant modes of expreſſion, very natural in thoſe ages, when men were accuſtomed to explain themſelves ſo much by actions and geſtures. In like manner, among the Northern American tribes, certain motions and actions were found to be much uſed as explanatory of their meaning, on all their great occaſions of intercourſe with each other; and by the belts and ſtrings of wampum, which they gave and received, they were accuſtomed to declare their meaning, as much as by their diſcourſes.

With regard to inflections of voice, theſe are ſo natural, that, to ſome nations, it has appeared eaſier to expreſs different ideas, by varying the tone with which they pronounced the ſame word, than to contrive words for all their ideas. This is the practice of the Chineſe in particular. The number of words in their language is ſaid not to be great; but, in ſpeaking, they vary each of their words on no leſs than five different tones, by which they make the ſame word ſignify five different things. This muſt give a great appearance of muſic or ſinging to their ſpeech. For thoſe inflections of voice which, in the infancy of language, were no more than harſh or diſſonant cries, muſt, as language gradually poliſhes, paſs into more ſmooth and muſical ſounds; and hence is formed, what we call, the proſody of a language.

It is remarkable, and deſerves attention, that, both in the Greek and Roman languages, this muſical and geſticulating pronunciation was

retained in a very high degree. Without having attended to this, we will be at a loſs in underſtanding ſeveral paſſages of the claſſics, which relate to the public ſpeaking, and the theatrical entertainments, of the ancients. It appears, from many circumſtances, that the proſody both of the Greeks and Romans, was carried much farther than ours, or that they ſpoke with more, and ſtronger, inflections of voice than we uſe. The quantity of their ſyllables was much more fixed than in any of the modern languages, and rendered much more ſenſible to the ear in pronouncing them. Beſides quantities, or the difference of ſhort and long, accents were placed upon moſt of their ſyllables, the acute, grave, and circumflex; the uſe of which accents we have now entirely loſt, but which, we know, determined the ſpeaker's voice to riſe or fall. Our modern pronunciation muſt have appeared to them a lifeleſs monotony. The declamation of their orators, and the pronunciation of their actors upon the ſtage, approached to the nature of recitative in muſic; was capable of being marked in notes, and ſupported with inſtruments; as ſeveral learned men have fully proved. And if this was the caſe, as they have ſhown, among the Romans, the Greeks, it is well known, were ſtill a more muſical people than the Romans, and carried their attention to tone and pronunciation much farther in every public exhibition. Ariſtotle, in his poetics, conſiders

the muſic of tragedy as one of its chief and moſt eſſential parts.

The caſe was parallel with regard to geſtures: for ſtrong tones, and animated geſtures, we may obſerve, always go together. Action is treated of by all the ancient critics, as the chief quality in every public ſpeaker. The action, both of the orators and the players in Greece and Rome, was far more vehement than what we are accuſtomed to. Roſcius would have ſeemed a madman to us. Geſture was of ſuch conſequence upon the ancient ſtage, that there is reaſon for believing, that, on ſome occaſions, the ſpeaking and the acting part were divided, which, according to our ideas, would form a ſtrange exhibition; one player ſpoke the words in the proper tones, while another performed the correſponding motions and geſtures. We learn from Cicero, that it was a conteſt between him and Roſcius, whether he could expreſs a ſentiment in a greater variety of phraſes, or Roſcius in a greater variety of intelligible ſignificant geſtures. At laſt, geſture came to engroſs the ſtage wholly; for, under the reigns of Auguſtus and Tiberius, the favorite entertainment of the public was the pantomime, which was carried on entirely by mute geſticulation. The people were moved, and wept at it, as much as at tragedies; and the paſſion for it became ſo ſtrong, that laws were obliged to be made, for reſtraining the ſenators from ſtudying the pantomime art. Now, though in

declamations and theatrical exhibitions, both tone and geſture were, doubtleſs, carried much farther than in common diſcourſe; yet public ſpeaking, of any kind, muſt, in every country, bear ſome proportion to the manner that is uſed in converſation; and ſuch public entertainments as I have now mentioned, could never have been reliſhed by a nation, whoſe tones and geſtures, in diſcourſe, were as languid as ours.

When the Barbarians ſpread themſelves over the Roman empire, theſe more phlegmatic nations did not retain the accents, the tones and geſtures, which neceſſity at firſt introduced, and cuſtom and fancy afterwards ſo long ſupported, in the Greek and Roman languages. As the Latin tongue was loſt in their idioms, ſo the character of ſpeech and pronunciation began to be changed throughout Europe. Nothing of the ſame attention was paid to the muſic of language, or to the pomp of declamation, and theatrical action. Both converſation and public ſpeaking became more ſimple and plain, ſuch as we now find it; without that enthuſiaſtic mixture of tones and geſtures, which diſtinguiſhed the ancient nations. At the reſtoration of letters, the genius of language was ſo much altered, and the manners of the people become ſo different, that it was no eaſy matter to underſtand what the ancients had ſaid, concerning their declamations and public ſpectacles. Our plain manner of ſpeaking, in theſe northern countries, expreſſes the paſſions with ſufficient energy,

to move thoſe who are not accuſtomed to any more vehement manner. But, undoubtedly, more varied tones, and more animated motions, carry a natural expreſſion of warmer feelings. Accordingly, in different modern languages, the proſody of ſpeech partakes more of muſic, in proportion to the livelineſs and ſenſibility of the people. A Frenchman both varies his accents, and geſticulates while he ſpeaks, much more than an Engliſhman. An Italian, a great deal more than either. Muſical pronunciation and expreſſive geſture are, to this day, the diſtinction of Italy.

From the pronunciation of language, let us proceed, in the third place, to conſider of the ſtyle of language in its moſt early ſtate, and of its progreſs in this reſpect alſo. As the manner in which men at firſt uttered their words, and maintained converſation, was ſtrong and expreſſive, enforcing their imperfectly expreſſed ideas by cries and geſtures; ſo the language which they uſed, could be no other than full of figures and metaphors, not correct indeed, but forcible and pictureſque.

We are apt, upon a ſuperficial view, to imagine, that thoſe modes of expreſſion which are called figures of ſpeech, are among the chief refinements of ſpeech, not invented till after language had advanced to its later periods, and mankind were brought into a poliſhed ſtate; and that, then, they were deviſed by orators and

rhetoricians. The quite contrary of this is the truth. Mankind never employed ſo many figures of ſpeech, as when they had hardly any words for expreſſing their meaning.

For firſt, the want of proper names for every object, obliged them to uſe one name for many; and of courſe, to expreſs themſelves by compariſons, metaphors, alluſions, and all thoſe ſubſtituted forms of ſpeech which render language figurative. Next, as the objects with which they were moſt converſant, were the ſenſible, material objects around them, names would be given to thoſe objects long before words were invented for ſignifying the diſpoſitions of the mind, or any ſort of moral and intellectual ideas. Hence, the early language of men being entirely made up of words deſcriptive of ſenſible objects, it became, of neceſſity, extremely metaphorical. For, to ſignify any deſire or paſſion, or any act or feeling of the mind, they had no preciſe expreſſion which was appropriated to that purpoſe, but were under a neceſſity of painting the emotion, or paſſion, which they felt, by alluſion to thoſe ſenſible objects which had moſt relation to it, and which could render it, in ſome ſort, viſible to others.

But it was not neceſſity alone, that gave riſe to this figured ſtyle. Other circumſtances alſo, at the commencement of language, contributed to it. In the infancy of all ſocieties, men are much under the dominion of imagination and paſſion. They live ſcattered and diſperſed; they

they are unacquainted with the courſe of things; they are, every day, meeting with new and ſtrange objects. Fear and ſurpriſe, wonder and aſtoniſhment, are their moſt frequent paſſions. Their language will neceſſarily partake of this character of their minds. They will be prone to exaggeration and hyperbole. They will be given to deſcribe every thing with the ſtrongeſt colors, and moſt vehement expreſſions; infinitely more than men living in the advanced and cultivated periods of ſociety, when their imagination is more chaſtened, their paſſions are more tamed, and a wider experience has rendered the objects of life more familiar to them. Even the manner in which I before ſhowed that the firſt tribes of men uttered their words, would have conſiderable influence on their ſtyle. Wherever ſtrong exclamations, tones, and geſtures, enter much into converſation, the imagination is always more exerciſed; a greater effort of fancy and paſſion is excited. Conſequently, the fancy kept awake, and rendered more ſprightly by this mode of utterance, operates upon ſtyle, and enlivens it more.

Theſe reaſonings are confirmed by undoubted facts. The ſtyle of all the moſt early languages, among nations who are in the firſt and rude periods of ſociety, is found, without exception, to be full of figures; hyperbolical and picturesque in a high degree. We have a ſtriking inſtance of this in the American languages, which are known, by the moſt authentic accounts, to be

figurative to exceſs. The Iroquois and Illinois, carry on their treaties and public tranſactions with bolder metaphors, and greater pomp of ſtyle, than we uſe in our poetical productions *.

Another remarkable inſtance is, the ſtyle of the old teſtament, which is carried on by conſtant alluſions to ſenſible objects. Iniquity,

* Thus, to give an inſtance of the ſingular ſtyle of theſe nations, the Five Nations of Canada, when entering on a treaty of peace with us, expreſſed themſelves by their chiefs, in the following language: "We are happy in having buried "under ground the red axe, that has ſo often been died "with the blood of our brethren. Now, in this fort, we "inter the axe, and plant the tree of peace. We plant a "tree, whoſe top will reach the ſun; and its branches ſpread "abroad, ſo that it ſhall be ſeen afar off. May its growth "never be ſtifled and choked; but may it ſhade both your "country and ours with its leaves! Let us make faſt its "roots, and extend them to the utmoſt of your colonies. If "the French ſhould come to ſhake this tree, we would know "it by the motion of its roots reaching into our country. "May the Great Spirit allow us to reſt in tranquillity upon "our mats, and never again dig up the axe to cut down the "tree of peace! Let the earth be trod hard over it, where "it lies buried. Let a ſtrong ſtream run under the pit, to "wash the evil away out of our ſight and remembrance. — "The fire that had long burned in Albany is extinguiſhed. "The bloody bed is waſhed clean, and the tears are wiped "from our eyes. We now renew the covenant chain of "friendſhip. Let it be kept bright and clean as ſilver, and "not ſuffered to contract any ruſt. Let not any one pull away "his arm from it." Theſe paſſages are extracted from Cadwallader Colden's Hiſtory of the Five Indian Nations; where it appears, from the authentic documents he produces, that ſuch is their genuine ſtyle.

or guilt, is expreſſed by "a ſpotted garment;" miſery, by "drinking the cup of aſtoniſhment;" vain purſuits, by "feeding on aſhes;" a ſinful life, by "a crooked path;" proſperity, by "the candle of the Lord ſhining on our head;" and the like, in innumerable inſtances. Hence, we have been accuſtomed to call this ſort of ſtyle, the Oriental ſtyle; as fancying it to be peculiar to the nations of the Eaſt: Whereas, from the American ſtyle, and from many other inſtances, it plainly appears not to have been peculiar to any one region or climate; but to have been common to all nations, in certain periods of ſociety and language.

Hence, we may receive ſome light concerning that ſeeming paradox, that poetry is more ancient than proſe. I ſhall have occaſion to diſcuſs this point fully hereafter, when I come to treat of the nature and origin of poetry. At preſent, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that, from what has been ſaid, it plainly appears, that the ſtyle of all language muſt have been originally poetical; ſtrongly tinctured with that enthuſiaſm, and that deſcriptive, metaphorical expreſſion which diſtinguiſhes poetry.

As language, in its progreſs, began to grow more copious, it gradually loſt that figurative ſtyle, which was its early character. When men were furniſhed with proper and familiar names for every object, both ſenſible and moral, they were not obliged to uſe ſo many circumlocutions. Style became more preciſe, and, of

courſe, more ſimple. Imagination too, in proportion as ſociety advanced, had leſs influence over mankind. The vehement manner of ſpeaking by tones and geſtures, became not ſo univerſal. The underſtanding was more exerciſed; the fancy, leſs. Intercourſe among mankind becoming more extenſive and frequent, clearneſs of ſtyle, in ſignifying their meaning to each other, was the chief object of attention. In place of poets, philoſophers became the inſtructors of men; and, in their reaſonings on all different ſubjects, introduced that plainer and ſimpler ſtyle of compoſition, which we now call proſe. Among the Greeks, Pherecydes of Scyros, the maſter of Pythagoras, is recorded to have been the firſt, who, in this ſenſe, compoſed any writing in proſe. The ancient metaphorical and poetical dreſs of language, was now laid aſide from the intercourſe of men, and reſerved for thoſe occaſions only, on which ornament was profeſſedly ſtudied.

Thus I have purſued the hiſtory of language through ſome of the variations it has undergone: I have conſidered it, in the firſt ſtructure, and compoſition, of words; in the manner of uttering or pronouncing words; and in the ſtyle and character of ſpeech. I have yet to conſider it in another view, reſpecting the order and arrangement of words; when we ſhall find a progreſs to have taken place, ſimilar to what I have been now illuſtrating.

LECTURE VII.

Riſe and Progreſs of Language, and of Writing.

WHEN we attend to the order in which words are arranged in a ſentence, or ſignificant propoſition, we find a very remarkable difference between the ancient and the modern tongues. The conſideration of this will ſerve to unfold farther the genius of language, and to ſhow the cauſes of thoſe alterations, which it has undergone, in the progreſs of ſociety.

In order to conceive diſtinctly the nature of that alteration of which I now ſpeak, let us go back, as we did formerly, to the moſt early period of language. Let us figure to ourſelves a ſavage, who beholds ſome object, ſuch as fruit, which raiſes his deſire, and who requeſts another to give it to him. Suppoſing our ſavage to be unacquainted with words, he would, in that caſe labor to make himſelf be underſtood, by pointing earneſtly at the object which he deſired, and uttering at the ſame time a paſſionate cry. Suppoſing him to have acquired words, the firſt

word which he uttered would, of courſe, be the name of that object. He would not expreſs himſelf, according to our Engliſh order of conſtruction, "give me fruit," but according to the Latin order, "fruit give me"; "fructum da "mihi:" For this plain reaſon, that his attention was wholly directed towards fruit, the deſired object. This was the exciting idea; the object which moved him to ſpeak; and, of courſe, would be the firſt named. Such an arrangement is preciſely putting into words the geſture which nature taught the ſavage to make, before he was acquainted with words; and therefore it may be depended upon as certain, that he would fall moſt readily into this arrangement.

Accuſtomed now to a different method of ordering our words, we call this an inverſion, and conſider it as a forced and unnatural order of ſpeech. But though not the moſt logical, it is, however, in one view, the moſt natural order; becauſe, it is the order ſuggeſted by imagination and deſire, which always impel us to mention their object in the firſt place. We might therefore conclude, *a priori*, that this would be the order in which words were moſt commonly arranged at the beginnings of language; and accordingly we find, in fact, that, in this order, words are arranged in moſt of the ancient tongues; as in the Greek and the Latin, and it is ſaid alſo, in the Ruſſian, the Sclavonic, the Gaëlic, and ſeveral of the American tongues.

In the Latin language, the arrangement which moſt commonly obtains, is, to place firſt, in the ſentence, that word which expreſſes the principal object of the diſcourſe, together with its circumſtances; and afterwards, the perſon, or the thing, that acts upon it. Thus Salluſt, comparing together the mind and the body; "animi imperio, corporis ſervitio, magis utimur;" which order certainly renders the ſentence more lively and ſtriking, than when it is arranged according to our Engliſh conſtruction; "we make moſt uſe of the direction of the "ſoul, and of the ſervice of the body." The Latin order gratifies more the rapidity of the imagination, which naturally runs firſt to that which is its chief object; and having once named it, carries it in view throughout the reſt of the ſentence. In the ſame manner in poetry:

Juſtum & tenacem propoſiti virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus inſtantis tyranni,
Mente quatit ſolida.———

Every perſon of taſte muſt be ſenſible, that here the words are arranged with a much greater regard to the figure which the ſeveral objects make in the fancy, than our Engliſh conſtruction admits; which would require the "juſtum & tenacem propoſiti virum," though, undoubtedly,

the capital object in the ſentence, to be thrown into the laſt place.

I have ſaid, that, in the Greek and Roman languages, the moſt common arrangement is, to place that firſt which ſtrikes the imagination of the ſpeaker moſt. I do not, however, pretend, that this holds without exception. Sometimes regard to the harmony of the period requires a different order; and in languages ſuſceptible of ſo much muſical beauty, and pronounced with ſo much tone and modulation as were uſed by thoſe nations, the harmony of periods was an object carefully ſtudied. Sometimes too, attention to the perſpicuity, to the force, or to the artful ſuſpenſion of the ſpeaker's meaning, alter this order; and produce ſuch varieties in the arrangement, that it is not eaſy to reduce them to any one principle. But, in general, this was the genius and character of moſt of the ancient languages, to give ſuch full liberty to the collocation of words, as allowed them to aſſume whatever order was moſt agreeable to the ſpeaker's imagination. The Hebrew is, indeed, an exception: which, though not altogether without inverſions, yet employs them leſs frequently, and approaches nearer to the Engliſh conſtruction, than either the Greek or the Latin.

All the modern languages of Europe have adopted a different arrangement from the ancient. In their proſe compoſitions, very little variety is admitted in the collocation of words; they

are moſtly fixed to one order; and that is, what may be called, the order of the underſtanding. They place firſt in the ſentence, the perſon or thing which ſpeaks or acts; next, its action; and laſtly, the object of its action. So that the ideas are made to ſucceed to one another not according to the degree of importance which the ſeveral objects carry in the imagination, but according to the order of nature and of time.

An Engliſh writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would ſay thus: "It is impoſſible "for me to paſs over, in ſilence, ſuch remark-"able mildneſs, ſuch ſingular and unheard of "clemency, and ſuch unuſual moderation, in "the exerciſe of ſupreme power." Here we have, firſt preſented to us, the perſon who ſpeaks. "It is impoſſible for *me;*" next, what that perſon is to do, "impoſſible for him *to paſs* "*over in ſilence;*" and laſtly, the object which moves him ſo to do, "the mildneſs, clemency, "and moderation of his patron." Cicero, from whom I have tranſlated theſe words, juſt reverſes this order; beginning with the object, placing that firſt which was the exciting idea in the ſpeaker's mind, and ending with the ſpeaker and his action. "Tantam manſuetudinem, tam "inuſitatam inauditamque clementiam, tantumque "in ſumma poteſtate rerum omnium modum, "tacitus nullo modo præterire poſſum." (Orat. pro Marcell.)

The Latin order is more animated; the Engliſh, more clear and diſtinct. The Romans generally arranged their words according to the order in which the ideas roſe in the ſpeaker's imagination. We arrange them according to the order in which the underſtanding directs thoſe ideas to be exhibited, in ſucceſſion, to the view of an other. Our arrangement, therefore, appears to be the conſequence of greater refinement in the art of ſpeech; as far as clearneſs in communication is underſtood to be the end of ſpeech.

In poetry, where we are ſuppoſed to riſe above the ordinary ſtyle, and to ſpeak the language of fancy and paſſion, our arrangement is not altogether ſo limited; but ſome greater liberty is allowed for tranſpoſition, and inverſion. Even there, however, that liberty is confined within narrow bounds, in compariſon of the ancient languages. The different modern tongues vary from one another, in this reſpect. The French language is, of them all, the moſt determinate in the order of its words, and admits the leaſt of inverſion, either in proſe or poetry. The Engliſh admits it more. But the Italian retains the moſt of the ancient tranſpoſitive character, though one is apt to think, at the expenſe of a little obſcurity in the ſtyle of ſome of their authors, who deal moſt in theſe tranſpoſitions.

It is proper, next, to obſerve, that there is one circumſtance in the ſtructure of all the modern tongues, which, of neceſſity, limits their

arrangement, in a great meaſure, to one fixed and determinate train. We have diſuſed thoſe differences of termination, which, in the Greek and Latin, diſtinguiſhed the ſeveral caſes of nouns, and tenſes of verbs; and which, thereby, pointed out the mutual relation of the ſeveral words in a ſentence to one another, though the related words were disjoined, and placed in different parts of the ſentence. This is an alteration in the ſtructure of language, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſay more in the next lecture. One obvious effect of it is, that we have now, for the moſt part, no way left us to ſhow the cloſe relation of any two words to one another in meaning, but by placing them cloſe to one another in the period. For inſtance; the Romans could, with propriety, expreſs themſelves thus:

Extinctum nymphæ crudeli funere Daphnim.
Flebant.———

Becauſe "extinctum & Daphnim," being both in the accuſative caſe; this ſhowed, that the adjective and the ſubſtantive were related to each other, though placed at the two extremities of the line; and that both were governed by the active verb "flebant," to which "nymphæ" plainly appeared to be the nominative. The different terminations here reduced all into order, and made the connexion of the ſeveral words perfectly clear. But let us tranſlate theſe words literally into Engliſh, according to the Latin

arrangement; "dead the nymphs by a cruel fate" "Daphnis lamented;" and they become a perfect riddle, in which it is impoſſible to find any meaning.

It was by means of this contrivance, which obtained in almoſt all the ancient languages, of varying the termination of nouns and verbs, and thereby pointing out the concordance and the government of the words, in a ſentence, that they enjoyed ſo much liberty of tranſpoſition, and could marſhal and arrange their words in any way that gratified the imagination, or pleaſed the ear. When language came to be modelled by the northern nations who overran the empire, they dropped the caſes of nouns, and the different terminations of verbs, with the more eaſe, becauſe they placed no great value upon the advantages ariſing from ſuch a ſtructure of language. They were attentive only to clearneſs, and copiouſneſs of expreſſion. They neither regarded much the harmony of ſound, nor ſought to gratify the imagination by the collocation of words. They ſtudied ſolely to expreſs themſelves in ſuch a manner as ſhould exhibit their ideas to others in the moſt diſtinct and intelligible order. And hence, if our language, by reaſon of the ſimple arrangement of its words, poſſeſſes leſs harmony, leſs beauty, and leſs force, than the Greek or Latin; it is, however, in its meaning, more obvious and plain.

Thus I have ſhown what the natural progreſs of language has been, in ſeveral material articles;

and this account of the genius and progreſs of language, lays a foundation for many obſervations, both curious and uſeful. From what has been ſaid, in this, and the preceding lecture, it appears, that language was, at firſt, barren in words, but deſcriptive by the ſound of theſe words; and expreſſive in the manner of uttering them, by the aid of ſignificant tones and geſtures: Style was figurative and poetical: arrangement was fanciful and lively. It appears, that, in all the ſucceſſive changes which language has undergone, as the world advanced, the underſtanding has gained ground on the fancy and imagination. The progreſs of language, in this reſpect, reſembles the progreſs of age in man. The imagination is moſt vigorous and predominant in youth; with advancing years, the imagination cools, and the underſtanding ripens. Thus language, proceeding from ſterility to copiouſneſs, hath, at the ſame time, proceeded from vivacity to accuracy; from fire and enthuſiaſm, to coolneſs and preciſion. Thoſe characters of early language, deſcriptive ſound, vehement tones and geſtures, figurative ſtyle, and inverted arrangement, all hang together, have a mutual influence on each other; and have all gradually given place, to arbitrary ſounds, calm pronunciation, ſimple ſtyle, plain arrangement. Language is become, in modern times, more correct, indeed, and accurate, but, however, leſs ſtriking and animated: In its ancient ſtate,

more favorable to poetry and oratory; in its preſent, to reaſon and philoſophy.

Having finiſhed my account of the progreſs of ſpeech, I proceed to give an account of the progreſs of writing, which next demands our notice; though it will not require ſo full a diſcuſſion as the former ſubject.

Next to ſpeech, writing is, beyond doubt, the moſt uſeful art of which men are poſſeſſed. It is plainly an improvement upon ſpeech, and therefore muſt have been poſterior to it in order of time. At firſt, men thought of nothing more than communicating their thoughts to one another, when preſent, by means of words, or ſounds, which they uttered. Afterwards, they deviſed this further method, of mutual communication with one another, when abſent, by means of marks or characters preſented to the eye, which we call writing.

Written characters are of two ſorts. They are either ſigns for things, or ſigns for words. Of the former ſort, ſigns of things, are the pictures, hieroglyphics, and ſymbols, employed by the ancient nations; of the latter ſort, ſigns for words, are the alphabetical characters, now employed by all Europeans. Theſe two kinds of writing are generically, and eſſentially diſtinct.

Pictures were, undoubtedly, the firſt eſſay towards writing. Imitation is ſo natural to man, that, in all ages, and among all nations, ſome methods have obtained, of copying or

tracing the likeneſs of ſenſible objects. Thoſe methods would ſoon be employed by men for giving ſome imperfect information to others, at a diſtance, of what had happened; or, for preſerving the memory of facts which they ſought to record. Thus, to ſignify that one man had killed another, they drew the figure of one man ſtretched upon the earth, and of another ſtanding by him with a deadly weapon in his hand. We find, in fact, that, when America was firſt diſcovered, this was the only ſort of writing known in the kingdom of Mexico. By hiſtorical pictures, the Mexicans are ſaid to have tranſmitted the memory of the moſt important tranſactions of their empire. Theſe, however, muſt have been extremely imperfect records; and the nations who had no other, muſt have been very groſs and rude. Pictures could do no more than delineate external events. They could neither exhibit the connexions of them, nor deſcribe ſuch qualities as were not viſible to the eye, nor convey any idea of the diſpoſitions, or words, of men.

To ſupply, in ſome degree, this defect, there aroſe, in proceſs of time, the invention of what are called, hieroglyphical characters; which may be conſidered as the ſecond ſtage of the art of writing. Hieroglyphics conſiſt in certain ſymbols, which are made to ſtand for inviſible objects, on account of an analogy or reſemblance which ſuch ſymbols were ſuppoſed

to bear to the objects. Thus, an eye, was the hieroglyphical ſymbol of knowledge; a circle, of eternity, which has neither beginning, nor end. Hieroglyphics, therefore, were a more refined and extenſive ſpecies of painting. Pictures delineated the reſemblance of external viſible objects. Hieroglyphics painted inviſible objects, by analogies taken from the external world.

Among the Mexicans, were found ſome traces of hieroglyphical characters, intermixed with their hiſtorical pictures. But Egypt was the country where this ſort of writing was moſt ſtudied, and brought into a regular art. In hieroglyphics, was conveyed all the boaſted wiſdom of their prieſts. According to the properties which they aſcribed to animals, or the qualities with which they ſuppoſed natural objects to be endowed, they pitched upon them to be the emblems, or hieroglyphics, of moral objects; and employed them in their writing for that end. Thus, ingratitude was denominated by a viper; imprudence, by a fly; wiſdom, by an ant; victory, by a hawk; a dutiful child, by a ſtork; a man univerſally ſhunned, by an eel, which they ſuppoſed to be found in company with no other fiſh. Sometimes they joined together two or more of theſe hieroglyphical characters; as, a ſerpent with a hawk's head; to denote nature, with God preſiding over it. But, as many of thoſe properties of objects which they aſſumed for the foundation of their hieroglyphics, were merely imaginary, and the

alluſions

alluſions drawn from them were forced and ambiguous; as the conjunction of their characters rendered them ſtill more obſcure, and muſt have expreſſed very indiſtinctly the connexions and relations of things; this ſort of writing could be no other than enigmatical, and confuſed, in the higheſt degree; and muſt have been a very imperfect vehicle of knowledge of any kind.

It has been imagined, that hieroglyphics were an invention of the Egyptian prieſts, for concealing their learning from common view; and that, upon this account, it was preferred by them to the alphabetical method of writing. But this is certainly a miſtake. Hieroglyphics were, undoubtedly, employed, at firſt, from neceſſity, not from choice or refinement; and would never have been thought of, if alphabetical characters had been known. The nature of the invention plainly ſhows it to have been one of thoſe groſs and rude eſſays towards writing, which were adopted in the early ages of the world; in order to extend farther the firſt method which they had employed of ſimple pictures, or repreſentations of viſible objects. Indeed, in after-times, when alphabetical writing was introduced into Egypt, and the hieroglyphical was, of courſe, fallen into diſuſe, it is known, that the prieſts ſtill employed the hieroglyphical characters, as a ſacred kind of writing, now become peculiar to themſelves, and ſerving to give an air of myſtery to their learning and religion. In this ſtate, the Greeks

found hieroglyphical writing, when they began to have intercourſe with Egypt; and ſome of their writers miſtook this uſe, to which they found it applied, for the cauſe that had given riſe to the invention.

As writing advanced, from pictures of viſible objects, to hieroglyphics, or ſymbols of things inviſible; from theſe latter, it advanced, among ſome nations, to ſimple arbitrary marks which ſtood for objects, though without any reſemblance or analogy to the objects ſignified. Of this nature was the method of writing practiſed among the Peruvians. They made uſe of ſmall cords, of different colors; and by knots upon theſe, of various ſizes, and differently ranged, they contrived ſigns for giving information, and communicating their thoughts to one another.

Of this nature alſo, are the written characters, which are uſed to this day, throughout the great empire of China. The Chineſe have no alphabet of letters, or ſimple ſounds, which compoſe their words. But every ſingle character which they uſe in writing, is ſignificant of an idea; it is a mark which ſtands for ſome one thing, or object. By conſequence, the number of theſe characters muſt be immenſe. It muſt correſpond to the whole number of objects, or ideas, which they have occaſion to expreſs; that is, to the whole number of words which they employ in ſpeech: nay, it muſt be greater than the number of words; one word, by varying

the tone, with which it is ſpoken, may be made to ſignify ſeveral different things. They are ſaid to have ſeventy thouſand of thoſe written characters. To read and write them to perfection, is the ſtudy of a whole life; which ſubjects learning, among them, to infinite diſadvantage; and muſt have greatly retarded the progreſs of all ſcience.

Concerning the origin of theſe Chineſe characters, there have been different opinions, and much controverſy. According to the moſt probable accounts, the Chineſe writing began, like the Egyptian, with pictures, and hieroglyphical figures. Theſe figures being, in progreſs, abbreviated in their form, for the ſake of writing them eaſily, and greatly enlarged in their number, paſſed, at length, into thoſe marks or characters which they now uſe, and which have ſpread themſelves through ſeveral nations of the Eaſt. For we are informed, that the Japaneſe, the Tonquineſe, and the Coreans, who ſpeak different languages from one another, and from the inhabitants of China, uſe, however, the ſame written characters with them; and, by this means, correſpond intelligibly with each other in writing, though ignorant of the language ſpoken in their ſeveral countries; a plain proof, that the Chineſe characters, like hieroglyphics, independent of language, are ſigns of things, not of words.

We have one inſtance of this ſort of writing in Europe. Our ciphers, as they are called, or

arithmetical figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. which we have derived from the Arabians, are ſignificant marks, preciſely of the ſame nature with the Chineſe characters. They have no dependence on words; but each figure repreſents an object; repreſents the number for which it ſtands; and, accordingly, on being preſented to the eye, is equally underſtood by all the nations who have agreed in the uſe of theſe ciphers, by Italians, Spaniards, French, and Engliſh, however different the languages of thoſe nations are from one another, and whatever different names they give, in their reſpective languages, to each numerical cipher.

As far, then, as we have yet advanced, nothing has appeared which reſembles our letters, or which can be called writing, in the ſenſe we now give to that term. What we have hitherto ſeen, were all direct ſigns for things, and made no uſe of the medium of ſound, or words; either ſigns by repreſentation, as the Mexican pictures; or ſigns by analogy, as the Egyptian hieroglyphics; or ſigns by inſtitution, as the Peruvian knots, the Chineſe characters, and the Arabian ciphers.

At length, in different nations, men became ſenſible of the imperfection, the ambiguity, and the tedioufneſs of each of theſe methods of communication with one another. They began to conſider, that by employing ſigns which ſhould ſtand not directly for things, but for the words which they uſed in ſpeech for naming

theſe things, a conſiderable advantage would be gained. For they reflected farther, that though the number of words in every language be, indeed, very great, yet the number of articulate ſounds, which are uſed in compoſing theſe words, is comparatively ſmall. The ſame ſimple ſounds are continually recurring and repeated; and are combined together, in various ways, for forming all the variety of words which we utter. They bethought themſelves, therefore, of inventing ſigns, not for each word, by itſelf, but for each of thoſe ſimple ſounds which we employ in forming our words; and, by joining together a few of thoſe ſigns, they ſaw that it would be practicable to expreſs, in writing, the whole combination of ſounds which our words require.

The firſt ſtep, in this new progreſs, was the invention of an alphabet of ſyllables, which probably preceded the invention of an alphabet of letters, among ſome of the ancient nations; and which is ſaid to be retained, to this day, in Æthiopia, and ſome countries of India. By fixing upon a particular mark, or character, for every ſyllable in the language, the number of characters, neceſſary to be uſed in writing, was reduced within a much ſmaller compaſs than the number of words in the language. Still, however, the number of characters was great; and muſt have continued to render both reading and writing very laborious arts. Till, at laſt, ſome happy genius aroſe; and tracing the ſounds

made by the human voice, to their moſt ſimple elements, reduced them to a very few vowels and conſonants, and, by affixing to each of theſe the ſigns which we now call letters, taught men how, by their combinations, to put into writing all the different words, or combinations of ſound, which they employed in ſpeech. By being reduced to this ſimplicity, the art of writing was brought to its higheſt ſtate of perfection; and, in this ſtate, we now enjoy it in all the countries of Europe.

To whom we are indebted for this ſublime and refined diſcovery, does not appear. Concealed by the darkneſs of remote antiquity, the great inventor is deprived of thoſe honors which would ſtill be paid to his memory, by all the lovers of knowledge and learning. It appears from the books which Moſes has written, that, among the Jews, and probably among the Egyptians, letters had been invented prior to his age. The univerſal tradition among the ancients is, that they were firſt imported into Greece by Cadmus the Phœnician; who, according to the common ſyſtem of chronology, was contemporary with Joſhua; according to Sir Iſaac Newton's ſyſtem, contemporary with king David. As the Phœnicians are not known to have been the inventors of any art or ſcience, though, by means of their extenſive commerce, they propagated the diſcoveries made by other nations, the moſt probable and natural account of the origin of alphabetical characters is, that

they took riſe in Egypt, the firſt civilized kingdom of which we have any authentic accounts, and the great ſource of arts and polity among the ancients. In that country, the favorite ſtudy of hieroglyphical characters, had directed much attention to the art of writing. Their hieroglyphics are known to have been intermixed with abbreviated ſymbols, and arbitrary marks; whence, at laſt, they caught the idea of contriving marks, not for things merely, but for ſounds. Accordingly, Plato (in Phædro) expreſsly attributes the invention of letters to Theuth, the Egyptian, who is ſuppoſed to have been the Hermes, or Mercury, of the Greeks. Cadmus himſelf, though he paſſed from Phœnicia to Greece, yet is affirmed, by ſeveral of the ancients, to have been originally of Thebes in Egypt. Moſt probably, Moſes carried with him the Egyptian letters into the land of Canaan; and there being adopted by the Phœnicians, who inhabited part of that country, they were tranſmitted into Greece.

The alphabet which Cadmus brought into Greece was imperfect, and is ſaid to have contained only ſixteen letters. The reſt were afterwards added, according as ſigns for proper ſounds were found to be wanting. It is curious to obſerve, that the letters which we uſe at this day, can be traced back to this very alphabet of Cadmus. The Roman alphabet, which obtains with us, and with moſt of the European nations, is plainly formed on the Greek, with a

few variations. And all learned men obſerve, that the Greek characters, eſpecially according to the manner in which they are formed in the oldeſt inſcriptions, have a remarkable conformity with the Hebrew or Samaritan characters, which, it is agreed, are the ſame with the Phœnician, or the alphabet of Cadmus. Invert the Greek characters from left to right, according to the Phœnician and Hebrew manner of writing, and they are nearly the ſame. Beſides the conformity of figure, the names or denominations of the letters alpha, beta, gamma, &c. and the order in which the letters are arranged, in all the ſeveral alphabets, Phœnician, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman, agree ſo much, as amounts to a demonſtration, that they were all derived originally from the ſame ſource. An invention ſo uſeful and ſimple, was greedily received by mankind and propagated with ſpeed and facility through many different nations.

The letters were, originally, written from the right hand towards the left; that is, in a contrary order to what we now practiſe. This manner of writing obtained among the Aſſyrians, Phœnicians, Arabians, and Hebrews; and from ſome very old inſcriptions, appears to have obtained alſo among the Greeks. Afterwards, the Greeks adopted a new method, of writing their lines alternately from the right to the left, and from the left to the right, which was called *Bouſtrophedon*; or, writing after the manner in which oxen plow the ground. Of

this, ſeveral ſpecimens ſtill remain; particularly the inſcription on the famous Sigæan monument; and down to the days of Solon, the legiſlator of Athens, this continued to be the common method of writing. At length, the motion from the left hand to the right being found more natural and commodious, the practice of writing, in this direction, prevailed throughout all the countries of Europe.

Writing was long a kind of engraving. Pillars, and tables of ſtone, were firſt employed for this purpoſe, and afterwards, plates of the ſofter metals, ſuch as lead. In proportion as writing became more common, lighter and more portable ſubſtances were employed. The leaves, and the bark of certain trees, were uſed in ſome countries; and in others, tablets of wood covered with a thin coat of ſoft wax, on which the impreſſion was made with a ſtylus of iron. In later times, the hides of animals, properly prepared and poliſhed into parchment, were the moſt common materials. Our preſent method of writing on paper, is an invention of no greater antiquity than the fourteenth century.

Thus I have given ſome account of the Progreſs of theſe two great arts, ſpeech and writing; by which men's thoughts are communicated, and the foundation laid for all knowledge and improvement. Let us conclude the ſubject, with comparing, in a few words, ſpoken language, and written language; or words uttered in our hearing, with words repreſented to the eye;

where we ſhall find ſeveral advantages and diſadvantages to be balanced on both ſides.

The advantages of writing above ſpeech are, that writing is both a more extenſive, and a more permanent method of communication. More extenſive; as it is not confined within the narrow circle of thoſe who hear our words; but, by means of written characters, we can ſend our thoughts abroad, and propagate them through the world; we can lift our voice, ſo as to ſpeak to the moſt diſtant regions of the earth. More permanent alſo; as it prolongs this voice to the moſt diſtant ages; it gives us the means of recording our ſentiments to futurity, and of perpetuating the inſtructive memory of paſt tranſactions. It likewiſe affords this advantage to ſuch as read, above ſuch as hear, that, having the written characters before their eyes, they can arreſt the ſenſe of the writer. They can pauſe, and revolve, and compare, at their leiſure, one paſſage with another; whereas, the voice is fugitive and paſſing; you muſt catch the words the moment they are uttered, or you loſe them for ever.

But although theſe be ſo great advantages of written language, that ſpeech, without writing, would have been very inadequate for the inſtruction of mankind; yet we muſt not forget to obſerve, that ſpoken language has a great ſuperiority over written language, in point of energy or force. The voice of the living ſpeaker, makes an impreſſion on the mind, much ſtronger than

can be made by the peruſal of any writing. The tones of voice, the looks and geſture, which accompany diſcourſe, and which no writing can convey, render diſcourſe, when it is well managed, infinitely more clear, and more expreſſive, than the moſt accurate writing. For tones, looks, and geſtures, are natural interpreters of the ſentiments of the mind. They remove ambiguities; they enforce impreſſions; they operate on us by means of ſympathy, which is one of the moſt powerful inſtruments of perſuaſion. Our ſympathy is always awakened more, by hearing the ſpeaker, than by reading his works in our cloſet. Hence, though writing may anſwer the purpoſes of mere inſtruction, yet all the great and high efforts of eloquence muſt be made, by means of ſpoken, not of written, language.

LECTURE VIII.

Structure of Language.

AFTER having given an account of the riſe and progreſs of language, I proceed to treat of its ſtructure, or of general grammar. The ſtructure of language it extremely artificial; and there are few ſciences, in which a deeper, or more refined logic, is employed, than in grammar. It is apt to be ſlighted by ſuperficial thinkers, as belonging to thoſe rudiments of knowledge, which were inculcated upon us in our earlieſt youth. But what was then inculcated before we could comprehend its principles, would abundantly repay our ſtudy in maturer years; and to the ignorance of it, muſt be attributed many of thoſe fundamental defects which appear in writing.

Few authors have written with philoſophical accuracy on the principles of general grammar; and, what is more to be regretted, fewer ſtill have thought of applying thoſe principles to the Engliſh language. While the French tongue has long been an object of attention to many able

and ingenious writers of that nation, who have conſidered its conſtruction, and determined its propriety with great accuracy, the genius and grammar of the Engliſh, to the reproach of the country, have not been ſtudied with equal care, or aſcertained with the ſame preciſion. Attempts have been made, indeed, of late, towards ſupplying this defect; and ſome able writers have entered on the ſubject; but much remains yet to be done.

I do not propoſe to give any ſyſtem, either of grammar in general, or of Engliſh grammar in particular. A minute diſcuſſion of the niceties of language would carry us too much off from other objects, which demand our attention in this courſe of lectures. But I propoſe to give a general view of the chief principles relating to this ſubject, in obſervations on the ſeveral parts of which ſpeech or language is compoſed; remarking, as I go along, the peculiarities of our own tongue. After which, I ſhall make ſome more particular remarks on the genius of the Engliſh language.

The firſt thing to be conſidered, is, the diviſion of the ſeveral parts of ſpeech. The eſſential parts of ſpeech are the ſame in all languages. There muſt always be ſome words which denote the names of objects, or mark the ſubject of diſcourſe; other words, which denote the qualities of thoſe objects, and expreſs what we affirm concerning them; and other words, which point out their connexions and relations.

at our firſt ſetting out, ſomewhat curious occurs. The individual objects which ſurround us, are infinite in number. A ſavage, wherever he looked, beheld foreſts and trees. To give ſeparate names to every one of theſe trees, would have been an endleſs and impracticable undertaking. His firſt object was, to give a name to that particular tree, whoſe fruit relieved his hunger, or whoſe ſhade protected him from the ſun. But obſerving, that though other trees were diſtinguiſhed from this by peculiar qualities of ſize or appearance, yet, that they alſo agreed and reſembled one another, in certain common qualities,

to carry on; as, the lion is coming, the river is ſwelling, &c. Many of their firſt words, it is likewiſe probable, were not ſimple ſubſtantive nouns, but ſubſtantives, accompanied with ſome of thoſe attributes, in conjunction with which they were moſt frequently accuſtomed to behold them; as, the great bear, the little hut, the wound made by the hatchet, &c. Of all which, the author produces inſtances from ſeveral of the American languages; and it is, undoubtedly, ſuitable to the natural courſe of the operations of the human mind, thus to begin with particulars the moſt obvious to ſenſe, and to proceed, from theſe, to more general expreſſions. He likewiſe obſerves, that the words of thoſe primitive tongues are far from being, as we might ſuppoſe them, rude and ſhort, and crowded with conſonants; but, on the contrary, are, for the moſt part, long words, and full of vowels. This is the conſequence of their being formed upon the natural ſounds which the voice utters with moſt eaſe, a little varied and diſtinguiſhed by articulations; and he ſhows this to hold, in fact, among moſt of the barbarous languages which are known.

qualities, ſuch as ſpringing from a root, and bearing branches and leaves, he formed, in his mind, ſome general idea of thoſe common qualities, and ranging all that poſſeſſed them under one claſs of objects, he called that whole claſs, *a tree*. Longer experience taught him to ſubdivide this genus into the ſeveral ſpecies of oak, pine, aſh, and the reſt, according as his obſervation extended to the ſeveral qualities in which theſe trees agreed or differed.

But, ſtill, he made uſe only of general terms in ſpeech. For the oak, the pine, and the aſh, were names of whole claſſes of objects; each of which included an immenſe number of undiſtinguiſhed individuals. Here then, it appears, that though the formation of abſtract, or general conceptions, is ſuppoſed to be a difficult operation of the mind; ſuch conceptions muſt have entered into the very firſt formation of language. For, if we except only the proper names of perſons, ſuch as Cæſar, John, Peter, all the other ſubſtantive nouns which we employ in diſcourſe, are the names, not of individual objects, but of very extenſive genera, or ſpecies of objects; as, man, lion, houſe, river, &c. We are not, however, to imagine, that this invention of general, or abſtract terms, requires any great exertion of metaphyſical capacity: For, by whatever ſteps the mind proceeds in it, it is certain, that, when men have once obſerved reſemblances among objects, they are naturally inclined to call all thoſe which reſemble one

another, by one common name; and of courſe, to claſs them under one ſpecies. We may daily obſerve this practiſed by children, in their firſt attempts towards acquiring language.

But now, after language had proceeded as far as I have deſcribed, the notification which it made of objects was ſtill very imperfect: For, when one mentioned to another, in diſcourſe, any ſubſtantive noun; ſuch as, man, lion, or tree, how was it to be known which man, which lion, or which tree he meant, among the many comprehended under one name? Here occurs a very curious, and a very uſeful contrivance for ſpecifying the individual object intended, by means of that part of ſpeech called, the article.

The force of the article conſiſts, in pointing, or ſingling out from the common maſs, the individual of which we mean to ſpeak. In Engliſh, we have two articles, *a* and *the*; *a* is more general and unlimited; *the* more definite and ſpecial. *A* is much the ſame with *one*, and marks only any one individual of a ſpecies; that individual being either unknown, or left undetermined; as, a lion, a king. *The*, which poſſeſſes more properly the force of the article, aſcertains ſome known or determined individual of the ſpecies; as, the lion, the king.

Articles are words of great uſe in ſpeech. In ſome languages, however, they are not found. The Greeks have but one article, ὁ ἡ τὸ, which anſwers to our definite, or proper article, *the*. They have no word which anſwers to our

article *a*; but they ſupply its place by the abſence of their article: Thus, Βασιλευς ſignifies *a* king; ὁ Βασιλευς, *the* king. The Latins have no article. In the room of it, they employ pronouns, as, hic, ille, iſte, for pointing out the objects which they want to diſtinguiſh. "Noſter ſermo," ſays Quinctilian, "articulos "non deſiderat, ideoque in alias partes orationis "ſparguntur." This, however, appears to me a defect in the Latin tongue; as articles contribute much to the clearneſs and preciſion of language.

In order to illuſtrate this, remark, what difference there is in the meaning of the following expreſſions in Engliſh, depending wholly on the different employment of the articles: "The ſon "of a king. — The ſon of the king — A ſon of "the king's." Each of theſe three phraſes has an entirely different meaning, which I need not explain, becauſe any one who underſtands the language, conceives it clearly at firſt hearing, through the different application of the articles, *a* and *the*. Whereas, in Latin, "filius regis," is wholly undetermined; and to explain, in which of theſe three ſenſes it is to be underſtood, for it may bear any of them, a circumlocution of ſeveral words muſt be uſed. In the ſame manner, "are you *a* king?" "Are you *the* "king?" are queſtions of quite ſeparate import; which, however, are confounded together in the Latin phraſe, "es-ne tu rex?" "Thou art "*a* man," is a very general and harmleſs poſition; but, "thou art *the* man," is an aſſertion,

capable, we know, of ſtriking terror and remorſe into the heart. Theſe obſervations illuſtrate the force and importance of articles: And, at the ſame time, I gladly lay hold of any opportunity of ſhowing the advantages of our own language.

Beſides this quality of being particularized by the article, three affections belong to ſubſtantive nouns, number, gender, and caſe, which require our conſideration.

Number diſtinguiſhes them as one, or many, of the ſame kind, called the ſingular and plural; a diſtinction found in all languages, and which muſt, indeed, have been coeval with the very infancy of language; as there were few things which men had more frequent occaſion to expreſs, than the difference between one and many. For the greater facility of expreſſing it, it has, in all languages, been marked by ſome variation made upon the ſubſtantive noun; as we ſee in Engliſh, our plural is commonly formed by the addition of the letter, S. In the Hebrew, Greek, and ſome other ancient languages, we find, not only a plural, but a dual number; the riſe of which may very naturally be accounted for, from ſeparate terms of numbering not being yet invented, and one, two, and many, being all, or, at leaſt, the chief numeral diſtinctions which men, at firſt, had any occaſion to take notice of.

Gender, is an affection of ſubſtantive nouns, which will lead us into more diſcuſſion than number. Gender, being founded on the diſtinction of the two ſexes, it is plain, that, in a

proper ſenſe, it can only find place in the names of living creatures, which admit the diſtinction of male and female; and, therefore, can be ranged under the maſculine or feminine genders. All other ſubſtantive nouns ought to belong, to what grammarians call, the neuter gender, which is meant to imply the negation of either ſex. But, with reſpect to this diſtribution, ſomewhat ſingular hath obtained in the ſtructure of language. For, in correſpondence to that diſtinction of male and female ſex, which runs through all the claſſes of animals, men have, in moſt languages, ranked a great number of inanimate objects alſo, under the like diſtinctions of maſculine and feminine. Thus we find it, both in the Greek and Latin tongues. *Gladius*, a ſword, for inſtance, is maſculine; *ſagitta*, an arrow, is feminine; and this aſſignation of ſex to inanimate objects, this diſtinction of them into maſculine, and feminine, appears often to be entirely capricious; derived from no other principle than the caſual ſtructure of the language, which refers to a certain gender, words of a certain termination. In the Greek and Latin, however, all inanimate objects are not diſtributed into maſculine and feminine, but many of them are alſo claſſed, where all of them ought to have been, under the neuter gender; as, *templum*, a church; *ſedile*, a ſeat.

But the genius of the French and Italian tongues differs, in this reſpect, from the Greek

and Latin. In the French and Italian, from whatever cauſe it has happened, ſo it is, that the neuter gender is wholly unknown, and that all their names of inanimate objects are put upon the ſame footing with living creatures; and diſtributed, without exception, into maſculine and feminine. The French have two articles, the maſculine *le*, and the feminine *la*; and one or other of theſe is prefixed to all ſubſtantive nouns in the language, to denote their gender. The Italians make the ſame univerſal uſe of their articles *il* and *lo*, for the maſculine; and *la*, for the feminine.

In the Engliſh language, it is remarkable that there obtains a peculiarity quite oppoſite. In the French and Italian, there is no neuter gender. In the Engliſh, when we uſe common diſcourſe, all ſubſtantive nouns, that are not names of living creatures, are neuter, without exception. *He*, *ſhe*, and *it*, are the marks of the three genders; and we always uſe *it*, in ſpeaking of any object where there is no ſex, or where the ſex is not known. The Engliſh is, perhaps, the only language in the known world (except the Chineſe, which is ſaid to agree with it in this particular), where the diſtinction of gender is properly and philoſophically applied in the uſe of words, and confined, as it ought to be, to mark the real diſtinctions of male and female.

Hence ariſes a very great and ſignal advantage of the Engliſh tongue, which it is of conſequence

to remark *. Though in common diſcourſe, as I have already obſerved, we employ only the proper and literal diſtinction of ſexes; yet the genius of the language permits us, whenever it will add beauty to our diſcourſe, to make the names of inanimate objects maſculine or feminine in a metaphorical ſenſe; and when we do ſo, we are underſtood to quit the literal ſtyle, and to uſe one of the figures of diſcourſe.

For inſtance; if I am ſpeaking of virtue, in the courſe of ordinary converſation, or of ſtrict reaſoning, I refer the word to no ſex or gender; I ſay, "virtue is its own reward," or, "it is "the law of our nature." But if I chuſe to riſe into a higher tone; if I ſeek to embelliſh and animate my diſcourſe, I give a ſex to virtue, I ſay, "ſhe deſcends from heaven;" "ſhe alone "confers true honor upon man," "her gifts are "the only durable rewards." By this means we have it in our power to vary our ſtyle at pleaſure. By making a very ſlight alteration, we can perſonify any object that we chuſe to introduce with dignity; and by this change of manner, we give warning, that we are paſſing from the ſtrict and logical, to the ornamented and rhetorical ſtyle.

This is an advantage which, not only every poet, but every good writer and ſpeaker in proſe, is, on many occaſions, glad to lay hold of, and

* The following obſervations on the metaphorical uſe of genders, in the English language, are taken from Mr. Harris's Hermes.

improve: and it is an advantage peculiar to our tongue; no other language poſſeſſes it. For, in other languages, every word has one fixed gender, maſculine, feminine, or neuter, which, can, upon no occaſion, be changed; ἀρετη for inſtance, in Greek, *virtus* in Latin, and *la vertu* in French, are uniformly feminine. *She*, muſt always be the pronoun anſwering to the word, whether you be writing in poetry or proſe, whether you be uſing the ſtyle of reaſoning, or that of declamation: whereas, in Engliſh, we can either expreſs ourſelves with the philoſophical accuracy of giving no gender to things inanimate; or by giving them gender, and transforming them into perſons, we adapt them to the ſtyle of poetry, and, when it is proper, we enliven proſe.

It deſerves to be further remarked on this ſubject, that, when we employ that liberty which our language allows, of aſcribing ſex to any inanimate object, we have not, however, the liberty of making it of what gender we pleaſe, maſculine or feminine; but are, in general, ſubjected to ſome rule of gender which the currency of language has fixed to that object. The foundation of that rule is imagined, by Mr. Harris, in his "Philoſophical Inquiry into the Principles of Grammar," to be laid in a certain diſtant reſemblance, or analogy, to the natural diſtinction of the two ſexes.

Thus, according to him, we commonly give the maſculine gender to thoſe ſubſtantive nouns uſed figuratively, which are conſpicuous for the

attributes of imparting, or communicating; which are by nature ſtrong and efficacious, either to good or evil; or which have a claim to ſome eminence, whether laudable or not. Thoſe again, he imagines, to be generally made feminine, which are conſpicuous for the attributes of containing, and of bringing forth; which have more of the paſſive in their nature, than the active; which are peculiarly beautiful, or amiable; or which have reſpect to ſuch exceſſes as are rather feminine than maſculine. Upon theſe principles he takes notice, that the ſun is always put in the maſculine gender with us; the moon in the feminine, as being the receptacle of the ſun's light. The earth is, univerſally, feminine. A ſhip, a country, a city, are likewiſe made feminine, as receivers, or containers. God, in all languages, is maſculine. Time, we make maſculine, on account of its mighty efficacy; virtue, feminine, from its beauty, and its being the object of love. Fortune is always feminine. Mr. Harris imagines, that the reaſons which determine the gender of ſuch capital words as theſe, hold in moſt other languages, as well as the Engliſh. This, however, appears doubtful. A variety of circumſtances, which ſeem caſual to us, becauſe we cannot reduce them to principles, muſt, unqueſtionably, have influenced the original formation of languages; and in no article whatever does language appear to have been more capricious, and to have proceeded leſs according to fixed rule, than in the impoſition of gender upon things inanimate; eſpecially

among ſuch nations as have applied the diſtinction of maſculine and feminine to all ſubſtantive nouns.

Having diſcuſſed gender, I proceed, next, to another remarkable peculiarity of ſubſtantive nouns, which, in the ſtyle of grammar, is called, their declenſion by caſes. Let us, firſt, conſider what caſes ſignify. In order to underſtand this, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that, after men had given names to external objects, had particularized them by means of the article, and diſtinguiſhed them by number and gender, ſtill their language remained extremely imperfect, till they had deviſed ſome method of expreſſing the relations which thoſe objects bore, one towards another. They would find it of little uſe to have a name for man, lion, tree, river, without being able, at the ſame time, to ſignify how theſe ſtood with reſpect to each other; whether, as approaching to, receding from, joined with, and the like. Indeed, the relations which objects bear to one another, are immenſely numerous; and therefore, to deviſe names for them all, muſt have been among the laſt and moſt difficult refinements of language. But, in its moſt early periods, it was abſolutely neceſſary to expreſs, in ſome way or other, ſuch relations as were moſt important, and as occurred moſt frequently in common ſpeech. Hence the genitive, dative, and ablative caſes of nouns, which expreſs the noun itſelf, together with thoſe relations, *of*, *to*, *from*, *with*, and *by*; the relations which, of all others, we have the moſt frequent occaſion to mention. The proper idea then of caſes

in declenſion, is no other than an expreſſion of the ſtate, or relation, which one object bears to another, denoted by ſome variation made upon the name of that object, moſt commonly in the final letters, and by ſome languages, in the initial.

All languages however, do not agree in this mode of expreſſion. The Greek, Latin, and ſeveral other languages, uſe declenſion. The Engliſh, French, and Italian, do not; or, at moſt, uſe it very imperfectly. In place of the variations of caſes, theſe modern tongues expreſs the relations of objects, by means of the words called prepoſitions, which are the names of thoſe relations, prefixed to the name of the object. Engliſh nouns have no caſe whatever, except a ſort of genitive, commonly formed by the addition of the letter S to the noun; as when we ſay "Dryden's poems," meaning the poems of Dryden. Our perſonal pronouns have alſo a caſe, which anſwers to the accuſative of the Latin, *I*, *me*,—*he*, *him*,—*who*, *whom*. There is nothing, then, or at leaſt very little, in the Grammar of our language, which correſponds to declenſion in the ancient languages.

Two queſtions, reſpecting this ſubject, may be put. Firſt, Which of theſe methods of expreſſing relations, whether that by declenſion, or that by prepoſitions, was the moſt ancient uſage in language? And next, Which of them has the beſt effect? Both methods, it is plain, are the ſame as to the ſenſe, and differ only in form. For the ſignificancy of the Roman language

would not have been altered, though the nouns, like ours, had been without caſes, provided they had employed prepoſitions; and though, to expreſs a diſciple of Plato, they had ſaid, diſcipulus de Plato," like the modern Italians, in place of " diſcipulus Platonis."

Now, with reſpect to the antiquity of caſes, although they may, on firſt view, ſeem to conſtitute a more artificial method than the other, of denoting relations, yet there are ſtrong reaſons for thinking that this was the earlieſt method practiſed by men. We find, in fact, that declenſions and caſes are uſed in moſt of what are called mother tongues or original languages, as well as in the Greek and Latin. And a very natural and ſatisfying account can be given why this uſage ſhould have early obtained. Relations are the moſt abſtract and metaphyſical ideas of any which men have occaſion to form, when they are conſidered by themſelves, and ſeparated from the related object. It would puzzle any man, as has been well obſerved by an author on this ſubject, to give a diſtinct account of what is meant by ſuch a word as *of*, or *from*; when it ſtands by itſelf, and to explain all that may be included under it. The firſt rude inventors of language, therefore, would be long in arriving at ſuch general terms. In place of conſidering any relation in the abſtract, and deviſing a name for it, they would much more eaſily conceive it in conjunction with a particular object; and

they would expreſs their conceptions of it, by varying the name of that object through all the different caſes; *hominis*, of a man; *homini*, to a man; *homine*, with a man, &c.

But, though this method of declenſion was, probably, the only method which men employed, at firſt, for denoting relations, yet, in progreſs of time, many other relations being obſerved, beſides thoſe which are ſignified by the caſes of nouns, and men alſo becoming more capable of general and metaphyſical ideas, ſeparate names were gradually invented for all the relations which occurred, forming that part of ſpeech which we now call prepoſitions. Prepoſitions being once introduced, they were found to be capable of ſupplying the place of caſes, by being prefixed to the nominative of the noun. Hence, it came to paſs, that, as nations were intermixed by migrations and conqueſts, and were obliged to learn, and adopt the languages of one another, prepoſitions ſupplanted the uſe of caſes and declenſions. When the Italian tongue, for inſtance, ſprung out of the Roman, it was found more eaſy and ſimple, by the Gothic nations, to accommodate a few prepoſitions to the nominative of every noun, and to ſay, *di Roma*, *al Roma*, *di Carthago*, *al Carthago*, than to remember all the variety of terminations, *Romæ*, *Romam*, *Carthaginis*, *Carthaginem*, which the uſe of declenſions required in the ancient nouns. By this progreſs we can give a natural account how nouns, in our modern

tongues, come to be ſo void of declenſion: A progreſs which is fully illuſtrated in Dr. Adam Smith's ingenious Diſſertation on the Formation of Languages.

With regard to the other queſtion on this ſubject, which of theſe two methods is of the greateſt utility and beauty? we ſhall find advantages and diſadvantages to be balanced on both ſides. There is no doubt that, by aboliſhing caſes, we have rendered the ſtructure of modern languages more ſimple. We have diſembarraſſed it of all the intricacy which aroſe from the different forms of declenſion, of which the Romans had no fewer than five; and from all the irregularities in theſe ſeveral declenſions. We have thereby rendered our languages more eaſy to be acquired, and leſs ſubject to the perplexity of rules. But, though the ſimplicity and eaſe of language be great and eſtimable advantages, yet, there are alſo ſuch diſadvantages attending the modern method, as leave the balance, on the whole, doubtful, or rather incline it to the ſide of antiquity.

For in the firſt place, by our conſtant uſe of prepoſitions for expreſſing the relations of things, we have filled language with a multitude of thoſe little words, which are eternally occurring in every ſentence, and may be thought thereby to have encumbered ſpeech, by an addition of terms: and by rendering it more proſix, to have enervated its force. In the ſecond place, we have certainly rendered the

ſound of language leſs agreeable to the ear, by depriving it of that variety and ſweetneſs, which aroſe from the length of words, and the change of terminations, occaſioned by the caſes in the Greek and Latin. But, in the third place, the moſt material diſadvantage is, that, by this abolition of caſes, and by a ſimilar alteration, of which I am to ſpeak in the next lecture, in the conjugation of verbs, we have deprived ourſelves of that liberty of tranſpoſition in the arrangement of words, which the ancient languages enjoyed.

In the ancient tongues, as I formerly obſerved, the different terminations, produced by declenſion and conjugation, pointed out the reference of the ſeveral words of a ſentence to one another, without the aid of juxtapoſition, ſuffered them to be placed, without ambiguity, in whatever order was moſt ſuited to give emphaſis to the meaning, or harmony to the ſound. But now, having none of thoſe marks of relation incorporated with the words themſelves, we have no other way left us, of ſhowing what words in a ſentence are moſt cloſely connected in meaning, than that of placing them cloſe by one another in the period. The meaning of the ſentence is brought out in ſeparate members and portions; it is broken down and divided. Whereas the ſtructure of the Greek and Roman ſentences, by the government of their nouns and verbs, preſented the meaning ſo interwoven and compounded in all its parts, as to make

us perceive it in one united view. The closing words of the period ascertained the relation of each member to another, and all that ought to be connected in our idea, appeared connected in the expression. Hence, more brevity, more vivacity, more force. That luggage of particles (as an ingenious author happily expresses it), which we are obliged always to carry along with us, both clogs style, and enfeebles sentiment *.

Pronouns are the class of words most nearly related to substantive nouns; being, as the name imports,

* "The various terminations of the same word, whether "verb or noun, are always conceived to be more intimately "connected with the term which they serve to lengthen, than "the additional, detached, and in themselves insignificant "particles, which we are obliged to employ as connectives to "our significant words. Our method gives almost the same "exposure to the one as to the other, making the significant "parts, and the insignificant equally conspicuous; theirs, "much oftener sinks, as it were, the former into the latter, "at once preserving their use, and hiding their weakness. Our "modern languages may, in this respect, be compared to the "art of the carpenter in its rudest state; when the union of "the materials, employed by the artisan, could be effected "only by the help of those external and coarse implements, "pins, nails, and cramps. The ancient languages resemble the "same art in its most improved state, after the invention of "dovetail joints, grooves, and mortises; when thus all the "principal junctions are effected, by forming properly, the "extremities, or terminations, of the pieces to be joined. For, "by means of these, the union of the parts is rendered closer, "while that by which that union is produced, is scarcely per-"ceivable." The Philosophy of Rhetoric. By Dr. Campbell, vol. ii. p. 412.

imports, repreſentatives, or ſubſtitutes, of nouns. *I*, *thou*, *he*, *ſhe*, and *it*, are no other than an abridged way of naming the perſons, or objects, with which we have immediate intercourſe, or to which we are obliged frequently to refer in diſcourſe. Accordingly, they are ſubject to the ſame modifications with ſubſtantive nouns, of number, gender, and caſe. Only, with reſpect to gender, we may obſerve, that the pronouns of the firſt and ſecond perſon, as they are called; *I* and *thou*, do not appear to have had the diſtinctions of gender given them in any language; for this plain reaſon, that, as they always refer to perſons who are preſent to each other, when they ſpeak, their ſex muſt appear, and therefore needs not be marked by a maſculine or feminine pronoun. But, as the third perſon may be abſent, or unknown, the diſtinction of gender there becomes neceſſary; and accordingly, in Engliſh, it hath all the three genders belonging to it; *he*, *ſhe*, *it*. As to caſes; even thoſe languages which have dropped them in ſubſtantive nouns, ſometimes retain more of them in pronouns, for the ſake of the greater readineſs in expreſſing relations; as pronouns are words of ſuch frequent occurrence in diſcourſe. In Engliſh, moſt of our grammarians hold the perſonal pronouns to have two caſes, beſides the nominative; a genitive, and an accuſative,—*I*, *mine*, *me*;—*thou*, *thine*, *thee*;—*he*, *his*, *him*; *who*, *whoſe*, *whom*.

In the firſt ſtage of ſpeech, it is probable that the places of thoſe pronouns were ſupplied, by

pointing to the object when preſent, and naming it when abſent. For one can hardly think that pronouns were of early invention; as they are words of ſuch a particular and artificial nature. *I*, *thou*, *he*, *it*, it is to be obſerved, are not names peculiar to any ſingle object, but ſo very general, that they may be applied to all perſons, or objects whatever, in certain circumſtances. *It*, is the moſt general term that can poſſibly be conceived, as it may ſtand for any one thing in the univerſe, of which we ſpeak. At the ſame time, theſe pronouns have this quality, that, in the circumſtances in which they are applied, they never denote more than one preciſe individual; which they aſcertain, and ſpecify, much in the ſame manner as is done by the article. So that pronouns are, at once, the moſt general, and moſt particular words in language. They are commonly the moſt irregular and troubleſome words to the learner, in the grammar of all tongues; as being the words moſt in common uſe, and ſubjected thereby to the greateſt varieties.

Adjectives, or terms of quality, ſuch as, *great*, *little*, *black*, *white*, *yours*, *ours*, are the plaineſt and ſimpleſt of all that claſs of words which are termed attributive. They are found in all languages, and, in all languages, muſt have been very early invented; as objects could not be diſtinguiſhed from each other, nor any intercourſe be carried on concerning them, till once names were given to their different qualities.

I have nothing to obſerve in relation to them, except that ſingularity which attends them in the Greek and Latin, of having the ſame form given them with ſubſtantive nouns; being declined, like them, by caſes, and ſubjected to the like diſtinctions of number and gender. Whence it has happened, that grammarians have made them to belong to the ſame part of ſpeech, and divided the noun into ſubſtantive and adjective; an arrangement, founded more on attention to the external form of words, than to their nature and force. For adjectives, or terms of quality, have not, by their nature, the leaſt reſemblance to ſubſtantive nouns, as they never expreſs any thing which can poſſibly ſubſiſt by itſelf; which is the very eſſence of the ſubſtantive noun. They are, indeed, more a-kin to verbs, which, like them, expreſs the attribute of ſome ſubſtance.

It may, at firſt view, appear ſomewhat odd and fantaſtic, that adjectives, ſhould, in theſe ancient languages, have aſſumed ſo much the form of ſubſtantives; ſince neither number, nor gender, nor caſes, nor relations, have any thing to do, in a proper ſenſe, with mere qualities, ſuch as, *good* or *great*, *ſoft* or *hard*. And yet *bonus*, and *magnus*, and *tener*, have their ſingular and plural, their maſculine and feminine, their genitives and datives, like any of the names of ſubſtances, or perſons. But this can be accounted for, from the genius of thoſe tongues. They avoided, as much as poſſible, conſidering qualities ſeparately, or in the abſtract. They made

them a part, or appendage, of the ſubſtance which they ſerved to diſtinguiſh; they made the adjective depend on its ſubſtantive, and reſemble it in termination, in number, and gender, in order that the two might coaleſce the more intimately, and be joined in the form of expreſſion, as they were in the nature of things. The liberty of tranſpoſition, too, which thoſe languages indulged, required ſuch a method as this to be followed. For, allowing the related words of a ſentence to be placed at a diſtance from each other, it required the relation of adjectives to their proper ſubſtantives to be pointed out, by ſuch ſimilar circumſtances of form and termination, as, according to the grammatical ſtyle, ſhould ſhow their concordance. When I ſay, in Engliſh, the "beautiful wife of a brave man," the juxtapoſition of the words prevents all ambiguity. But when I ſay, in Latin, "formoſa "fortis viri uxor;" it is only the agreement, in gender, number, and caſe, of the adjective "*formoſa*," which is the firſt word of the ſentence, with the ſubſtantive "*uxor*," which is the laſt word, that declares the meaning.

LECTURE IX.

Structure of Language.

Engliſh Tongue.

OF the whole claſs of words that are called attributive, indeed, of all the parts of ſpeech, the moſt complex, by far, is the verb. It is chiefly in this part of ſpeech, that the ſubtile and profound metaphyſic of language appears; and, therefore, in examining the nature and different variations of the verb, there might be room for ample diſcuſſion. But as I am ſenſible that ſuch grammatical diſcuſſions, when they are purſued far, become intricate and obſcure, I ſhall avoid dwelling any longer on this ſubject, than ſeems abſolutely neceſſary.

The verb is ſo far of the ſame nature with the adjective, that it expreſſes, like it, an attribute, or propriety, of ſome perſon or thing. But it does more than this. For, in all verbs, in every language, there are no leſs than three things implied at once; the attribute of ſome ſubſtantive, an affirmation concerning that attribute, and time. Thus, when I ſay, "the ſun

" ſhineth." Shining, is the attribute aſcribed to the ſun; the preſent time is marked; and an affirmation is included, that this property of ſhining belongs, at that time, to the ſun. The participle, " ſhining," is merely an adjective, which denotes an attribute, or property, and alſo expreſſes time; but carries no affirmation. The infinitive mood, " to ſhine," may be called the name of the verb; it carries neither time nor affirmation; but ſimply expreſſes that attribute, action, or ſtate of things, which is to be the ſubject of the other moods and tenſes. Hence the infinitive is often a-kin to a ſubſtantive noun; and both in Engliſh and Latin, is ſometimes conſtructed as ſuch. As, " ſcire tuum " nihil eſt." " Dulce & decorum eſt pro patria " mori." And in Engliſh, in the ſame manner. " To write well is difficult; to ſpeak eloquently " is ſtill more difficult." But as, through all the other tenſes and moods, the affirmation runs, and is eſſential to them; " the ſun ſhineth, was ſhining, " ſhone, will ſhine, would have ſhone," &c. the affirmation ſeems to be that which chiefly diſtinguiſhes the verb from the other parts of ſpeech, and gives it its moſt conſpicuous power. Hence there can be no ſentence or complete propoſition, without a verb either expreſſed or implied. For, whenever we ſpeak, we always mean to aſſert, that ſomething is, or is not; and the word which carries this aſſertion, or affirmation, is a verb. From this ſort of eminence belonging to it, this part of ſpeech hath received

its name; verb, from the Latin, *verbum*, or *the word*, by way of diſtinction.

Verbs, therefore, from their importance and neceſſity in ſpeech, muſt have been coeval with men's firſt attempt towards the formation of language: Though, indeed, it muſt have been the work of long time, to rear them up to that accurate and complex ſtructure, which they now poſſeſs. It ſeems very probable, as Dr. Smith hath ſuggeſted, that the radical verb, or the firſt form of it, in moſt languages, would be, what we now call, the impersonal verb. "It "rains; it thunders; it is light; it is agreeable;" and the like; as this is the very ſimpleſt form of the verb, and merely affirms the exiſtence of an event, or of a ſtate of things. By degrees, after pronouns were invented, ſuch verbs became perſonal, and were branched out into all the variety of tenſes and moods.

The tenſes of the verb are contrived to imply the ſeveral diſtinctions of time. Of theſe, I muſt take ſome notice, in order to ſhow the admirable accuracy with which language is conſtructed. We think, commonly, of no more than the three great diviſions of time, into the paſt, the preſent, and the future: and we might imagine, that if verbs had been ſo contrived, as ſimply to expreſs theſe, no more was needful. But language proceeds with much greater ſubtilty. It ſplits time into its ſeveral moments. It conſiders time as never ſtanding ſtill, but always flowing; things paſt, as more or leſs perfectly

completed; and things future, as more or leſs remote, by different gradations. Hence the great variety of tenſes in moſt tongues.

The preſent may, indeed, be always conſidered as one indiviſible point, ſuſceptible of no variety. "I write, or, I am writing; *ſcribo.*" But it is not ſo with the paſt. There is no language ſo poor, but it hath two or three tenſes to expreſs the varieties of it. Ours hath no fewer than four. 1. A paſt action may be conſidered as left unfiniſhed; which makes the imperfect tenſe, "I was writing; *ſcribebam.*" 2. As juſt now finiſhed. This makes the proper perfect tenſe, which, in Engliſh, is always expreſſed by the help of the auxiliary verb, "I have "written." 3. It may be conſidered as finiſhed ſome time ago; the particular time left indefinite. "I wrote; *ſcripſi;*" which may either ſignify, "I wrote yeſterday, or I wrote a twelvemonth "ago." This is what grammarians call an aoriſt, or indefinite paſt. 4. It may be conſidered as finiſhed before ſomething elſe, which is alſo paſt. This is the pluſquamperfect. "I had "written; *ſcripſeram.* I had written before I "received his letter."

Here we obſerve, with ſome pleaſure, that we have an advantage over the Latins, who have only three varieties upon the paſt time. They have no proper perfect tenſe, or one which diſtinguiſhes an action juſt now finiſhed, from an action that was finiſhed ſome time ago. In both theſe caſes, they muſt ſay, "*ſcripſi.*"

Though there be a manifeſt difference in the tenſes, which our language expreſſes, by this variation, "I have written," meaning, I have juſt now finiſhed writing; and, "I wrote," meaning at ſome former time, ſince which, other things have intervened. This difference the Romans have no tenſe to expreſs; and, therefore, can only do it by a circumlocution.

The chief varieties in the future time are two; a ſimple or indefinite future: "I ſhall "write; *ſcribam:*" And a future, relating to ſomething elſe, which is alſo future. "I ſhall "have written; *ſcripſero.*" I ſhall have written before he arrives *.

Beſides tenſes, or the power of expreſſing time, verbs admit the diſtinction of voices, as they are called, the active and the paſſive; according as the affirmation reſpects ſomething that is done, or ſomething that is ſuffered; "I love, "or I am loved." They admit alſo the diſtinction of moods, which are deſigned to expreſs the affirmation, whether active or paſſive, under different forms. The indicative mood, for inſtance, ſimply declares a propoſition, "I write; I have "written;" the imperative requires, commands, threatens, "write thou; let him write." The ſubjunctive expreſſes the propoſition under the

* On the tenſes of verbs, Mr. Harris's Hermes may be conſulted, by ſuch as deſire to ſee them ſcrutinized with metaphyſical accuracy; and alſo, the Treatiſe on the Origin and Progreſs of Language, Vol. ii. p. 125.

form of a condition, or in ſubordination to ſome other thing, to which a reference is made, "I "might write, I could write, I ſhould write, if "the caſe were ſo and ſo." This manner of expreſſing an affirmation, under ſo many different forms, together alſo with the diſtinction of the three perſons, *I*, *thou*, and *he*, conſtitutes what is called, the conjugation of verbs, which makes ſo great a part of the grammar of all languages.

It now clearly appears, as I before obſerved, that, of all the parts of ſpeech, verbs are, by far, the moſt artificial and complex. Conſider only, how many things are denoted by this ſingle Latin word "*amaviſſem*, I would "have loved." Firſt, the perſon who ſpeaks, "I." Secondly, an attribute, or action of that perſon, "loving." Thirdly, an affirmation concerning that action. Fourthly, the paſt time denoted in that affirmation, "have "loved." And, Fifthly, a condition on which the action is ſuſpended, "would have loved." It appears curious and remarkable, that words of this complex import, and with more or leſs of this artificial ſtructure, are to be found, as far as we know, in all languages of the world.

Indeed, the form of conjugation, or the manner of expreſſing all theſe varieties in the verb, differs greatly in different tongues. Conjugation is eſteemed moſt perfect in thoſe languages, which, by varying either the termination or the initial ſyllable of the verb,

expreſs the greateſt number of important circumſtances, without the help of auxiliary words. In the Oriental tongues, the verbs are ſaid to have few tenſes, or expreſſions of time; but then their moods are ſo contrived, as to expreſs a great variety of circumſtances and relations. In the Hebrew, for inſtance, they ſay, in one word, without the help of any auxiliary, not only "I have taught," but "I have taught "exactly, or often; I have been commanded "to teach; I have taught myſelf." The Greek, which is the moſt perfect of all the known tongues, is very regular and complete in all the tenſes and moods. The Latin is formed on the ſame model, but more imperfect; eſpecially in the paſſive voice, which forms moſt of the tenſes by the help of the auxiliary "*ſum.*"

In all the modern European tongues, conjugation is very defective. They admit few varieties in the termination of the verb itſelf; but have almoſt conſtant recourſe to their auxiliary verbs, throughout all the moods and tenſes, both active and paſſive. Language has undergone a change in conjugation, perfectly ſimilar to that, which I ſhowed in the laſt lecture, it underwent with reſpect to declenſion. As prepoſitions, prefixed to the noun, ſuperſeded the uſe of caſes; ſo the two great auxiliary verbs, to *have*, and to *be*, with thoſe other auxiliaries which we uſe in Engliſh, *do*, *ſhall*, *will*, *may*, and *can*, prefixed to the participle,

ſuperſede, in a great meaſure, the different terminations of moods and tenſes, which formed the ancient conjugations.

The alteration, in both caſes, was owing to the ſame cauſe, and will be eaſily underſtood, from reflecting on what was formerly obſerved. The auxiliary verbs are like prepoſitions, words of a very general and abſtract nature. They imply the different modifications of ſimple exiſtence, conſidered alone, and without reference to any particular thing. In the early ſtate of ſpeech, the import of them would be incorporated, ſo to ſpeak, with every particular verb in its tenſes and moods, long before words were invented for denoting ſuch abſtract conceptions of exiſtence, alone, and by themſelves. But after thoſe auxiliary verbs came, in the progreſs of language, to be invented and known, and to have tenſes and moods given to them like other verbs; it was found, that as they carried in their nature the force of that affirmation which diſtinguiſhes the verb, they might, by being joined with the participle which gives the meaning of the verb, ſupply the place of moſt of the moods and tenſes. Hence, as the modern tongues began to riſe out of the ruins of the ancient, this method eſtabliſhed itſelf in the new formation of ſpeech. Such words, for inſtance, as, *am*, *was*, *have*, *ſhall*, being once familiar, it appeared more eaſy to apply theſe to any verb whatever; as, *I am loved; I was loved; I have loved;* than to

remember that variety of terminations which were requiſite in conjugating the ancient verbs, *amor*, *amabar*, *amavi*, &c. Two or three varieties only, in the termination of the verb, were retained; as, *love*, *loved*, *loving;* and all the reſt were dropt. The conſequence, however, of this practice, was the ſame as that of aboliſhing declenſions. It rendered language more ſimple and eaſy in its ſtructure; but withal, more prolix, and leſs graceful. This finiſhes all that ſeemed moſt neceſſary to be obſerved with reſpect to verbs.

The remaining parts of ſpeech, which are called the indeclinable parts, or that admit of no variations, will not detain us long.

Adverbs are the firſt that occur. Theſe form a very numerous claſs of words in every language, reducible, in general, to the head of attributives; as they ſerve to modify, or to denote ſome circumſtance of an action, or of a quality, relative to its time, place, order, degree, and the other properties of it, which we have occaſion to ſpecify. They are, for the moſt part, no more than an abridged mode of ſpeech, expreſſing, by one word, what might, by a circumlocution, be reſolved into two or more words belonging to the other parts of ſpeech. "Exceedingly," for inſtance, is the ſame as, "in a high degree; "bravely," the ſame as, "with bravery or valor;" "here," the ſame as, "in this place;" "often, and ſeldom," the ſame as, "for many and for few times:" and

ſo of the reſt. Hence, adverbs may be conceived as of leſs neceſſity, and of later introduction into the ſyſtem of ſpeech, than many other claſſes of words; and, accordingly, the great body of them are derived from other words formerly eſtabliſhed in the language.

Prepoſitions and conjunctions, are words more eſſential to diſcourſe than the greateſt part of adverbs. They form that claſs of words, called connectives, without which there could be no language; ſerving to expreſs the relations which things bear to one another, their mutual influence, dependencies, and coherence; thereby joining words together into intelligible and ſignificant propoſitions. Conjunctions are generally employed for connecting ſentences, or members of ſentences; as, *and*, *becauſe*, *although*, and the like. Prepoſitions are employed for connecting words, by ſhowing the relation which one ſubſtantive noun bears to another; as *of*, *from*, *to*, *above*, *below*, &c. Of the force of theſe I had occaſion to ſpeak before, when treating of the caſes and declenſions of ſubſtantive nouns.

It is abundantly evident, that all theſe connective particles muſt be of the greateſt uſe in ſpeech, ſeeing they point out the relations and tranſitions by which the mind paſſes from one idea to another. They are the foundation of all reaſoning, which is no other thing than the connexion of thoughts. And, therefore, though among barbarous nations, and in the rude

uncivilized ages of the world, the ſtock of theſe words might be ſmall, it muſt always have increaſed, as mankind advanced in the arts of reaſoning and reflection. The more any nation is improved by ſcience, and the more perfect their language becomes, we may naturally expect, that it will abound the more with connective particles; expreſſing relations of things, and tranſitions of thought, which had eſcaped a groſſer view. Accordingly, no tongue is ſo full of them as the Greek, in conſequence of the acute and ſubtile genius of that refined people. In every language, much of the beauty and ſtrength of it depends on the proper uſe of conjunctions, prepoſitions, and thoſe relative pronouns, which alſo ſerve the ſame purpoſe of connecting the different parts of diſcourſe. It is the right, or wrong management of theſe, which chiefly makes diſcourſe appear firm and compacted; or disjointed and looſe; which cauſes it to march with a ſmooth and even pace, or with gouty and hobbling ſteps.

I ſhall dwell no longer on the general conſtruction of language. Allow me, only, before I diſmiſs the ſubject, to obſerve, that dry and intricate as it may ſeem to ſome, it is, however, of great importance, and very nearly connected with the philoſophy of the human mind. For, if ſpeech be the vehicle, or interpreter of the conceptions of our minds, an examination of its ſtructure and progreſs cannot but unfold many things concerning the nature

and progreſs of our conceptions themſelves, and the operations of our faculties; a ſubject that is always inſtructive to man; "nequis," ſays Quinctilian, an author of excellent judgment, "nequis tanquam parva faſtidiat grammatices "elementa. Non quia magnæ ſit operæ con- "ſonantes a vocalibus diſcernere, eaſque in ſe- "mivocalium numerum, mutarumque partiri, "ſed quia interiora velut ſacri hujus adeuntibus, "apparebit multa rerum ſubtilitas, quæ non "modo acuere ingenia puerilia, ſed exercere "altiſſimam quoque eruditionem ac ſcientiam "poſſit *," 1. 4.

Let us now come nearer to our own language. In this, and the preceding lecture, ſome obſervations have already been made on its ſtructure. But it is proper, that we ſhould be a little more particular in the examination of it.

The language which is, at preſent, ſpoken throughout Great Britain, is neither the ancient primitive ſpeech of the iſland, nor derived from it; but is altogether of foreign origin. The language

* "Let no man deſpiſe, as inconſiderable, the elements of "grammar, becauſe it may ſeem to him a matter of ſmall "conſequence, to ſhow the diſtinction between vowels and con- "ſonants, and to divide the latter into liquids and mutes. But "they who penetrate into the innermoſt parts of this temple "of ſcience, will there diſcover ſuch refinement and ſubtilty "of matter, as is not only proper to ſharpen the underſtandings "of young men, but ſufficient to give exerciſe for the moſt "profound knowledge and erudition."

language of the firſt inhabitants of our iſland, beyond doubt, was the Celtic, or Gaelic, common to them with Gaul; from which country, it appears, by many circumſtances, that Great Britain was peopled. This Celtic tongue, which is ſaid to be very expreſſive and copious, and is, probably, one of the moſt ancient languages in the world, obtained once in moſt of the weſtern regions of Europe. It was the language of Gaul, of Great Britain, of Ireland, and very probably, of Spain alſo; till, in the courſe of thoſe revolutions, which, by means of the conqueſts, firſt, of the Romans, and afterwards, of the northern nations, changed the government, ſpeech, and, in a manner, the whole face of Europe, this tongue was gradually obliterated; and now ſubſiſts only in the mountains of Wales, in the Highlands of Scotland, and among the wild Iriſh. For the Iriſh, the Welſh, and the Erſe, are no other than different dialects of the ſame tongue; the ancient Celtic.

This, then, was the language, of the primitive Britons, the firſt inhabitants, that we know of, in our iſland; and continued ſo till the arrival of the Saxons in England, in the year of our Lord 450; who, having conquered the Britons, did not intermix with them, but expelled them from their habitations, and drove them, together with their language, into the mountains of Wales. The Saxons were one of

thoſe northern nations that overran Europe; and their tongue, a dialect of the Gothic or Teutonic, altogether diſtinct from the Celtic, laid the foundation of the preſent Engliſh tongue. With ſome intermixture of Daniſh, a language, probably, from the ſame root with the Saxon, it continued to be ſpoken throughout the ſouthern part of the iſland, till the time of William the Conqueror. He introduced his Norman or French as the language of the court, which made a conſiderable change in the ſpeech of the nation; and the Engliſh, which was ſpoken afterwards, and continues to be ſpoken now, is a mixture of the ancient Saxon, and this Norman French, together with ſuch new and foreign words as commerce and learning have, in progreſs of time, gradually introduced.

The hiſtory of the Engliſh language can, in this manner, be clearly traced. The language ſpoken in the low countries of Scotland, is now, and has been for many centuries, no other than a dialect of the Engliſh. How, indeed or by what ſteps, the ancient Celtic tongue came to be baniſhed from the low countries in Scotland, and to make its retreat into the highlands and iſlands, cannot be ſo well pointed out, as how the like revolution was brought about in England. Whether the ſouthernmoſt part of Scotland was once ſubject to the Saxons, and formed a part of the kingdom of Northumberland; or, whether the great number of Engliſh exiles that retreated

into Scotland, upon the Norman conqueſt, and upon other occaſions, introduced into that country their own language, which afterwards, by the mutual intercourſe of the two nations, prevailed over the Celtic, are uncertain and conteſted points, the diſcuſſion of which would lead us too far from our ſubject.

From what has been ſaid, it appears, that the Teutonic dialect is the baſis of our preſent ſpeech. It has been imported among us in three different forms, the Saxon, the Daniſh, and the Norman; all which have mingled together in our language. A very great number of our words too, are plainly derived from the Latin. Theſe, we had not directly from the Latin, but moſt of them, it is probable, entered into our tongue through the channel of that Norman French, which William the Conqueror introduced. For, as the Romans had long been in full poſſeſſion of Gaul, the language ſpoken in that country, when it was invaded by the Franks and Normans, was a ſort of corrupted Latin, mingled with Celtic, to which was given the name of Romanſh: and as the Franks and Normans did not, like the Saxons in England, expel the inhabitants, but, after their victories, mingled with them; the language of the country became a compound of the Teutonic dialect imported by theſe conquerors, and of the former corrupted Latin. Hence, the French language has always continued to have a very conſiderable affinity

with the Latin; and hence, a great number of words of Latin origin, which were in uſe among the Normans in France, were introduced into our tongue at the conqueſt; to which, indeed, many have ſince been added, directly from the Latin, in conſequence of the great diffuſion of Roman literature throughout all Europe.

From the influx of ſo many ſtreams, from the junction of ſo many diſſimilar parts, it naturally follows, that the Engliſh, like every compounded language, muſt needs be ſomewhat irregular. We cannot expect from it that correſpondence of parts, that complete analogy in ſtructure, which may be found in thoſe ſimpler language, which have been formed in a manner within themſelves, and built on one foundation. Hence, as I before ſhowed, it has but ſmall remains of conjugation or declenſion; and its ſyntax is narrow, as there are few marks in the words themſelves that can ſhow their relation to each other, or, in the grammatical ſtyle, point out either their concordance, or their government, in the ſentence. Our words having been brought to us from ſeveral different regions, ſtraggle, if we may ſo ſpeak, aſunder from each other; and do not coaleſce ſo naturally in the ſtructure of a ſentence, as the words in the Greek and Roman tongues.

But theſe diſadvantages, if they be ſuch, of a compound language, are balanced by other advantages that attend it; particularly, by the

number and variety of words with which ſuch a language is likely to be enriched. Few languages are, in fact, more copious than the Engliſh. In all grave ſubjects eſpecially, hiſtorical, critical, political, and moral, no writer has the leaſt reaſon to complain of the barrenneſs of our tongue. The ſtudious reflecting genius of the people, has brought together great ſtore of expreſſions, on ſuch ſubjects, from every quarter. We are rich too in the language of poetry. Our poetical ſtyle differs widely from proſe, not in point of numbers only, but in the very words themſelves; which ſhows what a ſtock and compaſs of words we have it in our power to ſelect and employ, ſuited to thoſe different occaſions. Herein we are infinitely ſuperior to the French, whoſe poetical language, if it were not diſtinguiſhed by rhyme, would not be known to differ from their ordinary proſe.

It is chiefly, indeed, on grave ſubjects, and with reſpect to the ſtronger emotions of the mind, that our language diſplays its power of expreſſion. We are ſaid to have thirty words, at leaſt, for denoting all the varieties of the paſſion of anger *. But, in deſcribing the more

* Anger, wrath, paſſion, rage, fury, outrage, fierceneſs, ſharpneſs, animoſity, choler, reſentment, heat, heart-burning; to fume, ſtorm, inflame, be incenſed; to vex, kindle, irritate, enrage, exaſperate, provoke, fret; to be ſullen, haſty, hot, rough, ſour, peevish, &c.

Preface to Greenwood's Grammar.

delicate ſentiments and emotions, our tongue is not ſo fertile. It muſt be confeſſed, that the French language ſurpaſſes ours, by far, in expreſſing the nicer ſhades of character; eſpecially thoſe varieties of manner, temper, and behaviour, which are diſplayed in our ſocial intercourſe with one another. Let any one attempt to tranſlate, into Engliſh, only a few pages of one of Marivaux's novels, and he will ſoon be ſenſible of our deficiency of expreſſion on theſe ſubjects. Indeed, no language is ſo copious as the French for whatever is delicate, gay, and amuſing. It is, perhaps, the happieſt language for converſation in the known world; but, on the higher ſubjects of compoſition, the Engliſh may be juſtly eſteemed to excel it conſiderably.

Language is generally underſtood to receive its predominant tincture from the national character of the people who ſpeak it. We muſt not, indeed, expect, that it will carry an exact and full impreſſion of their genius and manners; for, among all nations, the original ſtock of words which they received from their anceſtors, remain as the foundation of their ſpeech throughout many ages, while, their manners undergo, perhaps, very great alterations. National character will, however, always have ſome perceptible influence on the turn of language; and the gaiety and vivacity of the French, and the gravity and thoughtfulneſs of the Engliſh, are ſufficiently impreſſed on their reſpective tongues.

From the genius of our language, and the character of thoſe who ſpeak it, it may be expected to have ſtrength and energy. It is, indeed, naturally prolix: owing to the great number of particles and auxiliary verbs which we are obliged conſtantly to employ; and this prolixity muſt, in ſome degree, enfeeble it. We ſeldom can expreſs ſo much by one word as was done by the verbs, and by the nouns, in the Greek and Roman languages. Our ſtyle is leſs compact; our conceptions being ſpread out among more words, and ſplit, as it were, into more parts, make a fainter impreſſion when we utter them. Notwithſtanding this defect, by our abounding in terms for expreſſing all the ſtrong emotions of the mind, and by the liberty which we enjoy, in a greater degree than moſt nations, of compounding words, our language may be eſteemed to poſſeſs conſiderable force of expreſſion; comparatively, at leaſt, with the other modern tongues, though much below the ancient. The ſtyle of Milton alone, both in poetry and proſe, is a ſufficient proof, that the Engliſh tongue is far from being deſtitute of nerves and energy.

The flexibility of a language, or its power of accommodation to different ſtyles and manners, ſo as to be either grave and ſtrong, or eaſy and flowing, or tender and gentle, or pompous and magnificent, as occaſions require, or as an author's genius prompts, is a quality

of great importance in ſpeaking and writing. It ſeems to depend upon three things; the copiouſneſs of a language; the different arrangements of which its words are ſuſceptible; and the variety and beauty of the ſound of thoſe words, ſo as to correſpond to many different ſubjects. Never did any tongue poſſeſs this quality ſo eminently as the Greek, which every writer of genius could ſo mould, as to make the ſtyle perfectly expreſſive of his own manner and peculiar turn. It had all the three requiſites, which I have mentioned, as neceſſary for this purpoſe. It joined to theſe the graceful variety of its different dialects; and thereby readily aſſumed every ſort of character which an author could wiſh, from the moſt ſimple and moſt familiar, up to the moſt majeſtic. The Latin, though a very beautiful language, is inferior, in this reſpect, to the Greek. It has more of a fixed character of ſtatelineſs and gravity. It is always firm and maſculine in the tenor of its ſound; and is ſupported by a certain ſenatorial dignity of which it is difficult for a writer to diveſt it wholly, on any occaſion. Among the modern tongues, the Italian poſſeſſes a great deal more of this flexibility than the French. By its copiouſneſs, its freedom of arrangement, and the great beauty and harmony of its ſounds, it ſuits itſelf very happily to moſt ſubjects, either in proſe or in poetry; is capable of the auguſt and the ſtrong, as well as the tender; and ſeems to

be, on the whole, the moſt perfect of all the modern dialects which have ariſen out of the ruins of the ancient. Our own language, though not equal to the Italian in flexibility, yet is not deſtitute of a conſiderable degree of this quality. If any one will conſider the diverſity of ſtyle which appears in ſome of our claſſics; that great difference of manner, for inſtance, which is marked by the ſtyle of Lord Shaftſbury, and that of Dean Swift; he will ſee, in our tongue, ſuch a circle of expreſſion, ſuch a power of accommodation to the different taſte of writers, as redounds not a little to its honor.

What the Engliſh has been moſt taxed with, is its deficiency in harmany of ſound. But though every native is apt to be partial to the ſounds of his own language, and may, therefore, be ſuſpected of not being a fair judge in this point; yet, I imagine, there are evident grounds on which it may be ſhown, that this charge againſt our tongue has been carried too far. The melody of our verſification, its power of ſupporting poetical numbers, without any aſſiſtance from rhyme, is alone a ſufficient proof that our language is far from being unmuſical. Our verſe is, after the Italian, the moſt diverſified and harmonious of any of the modern dialects; unqueſtionably far beyond the French verſe, in variety, ſweetneſs and melody. Mr. Sheridan has ſhown, in his lectures, that we abound more in vowel and diphthong ſounds, than moſt

languages, and theſe too, ſo divided into long and ſhort, as to afford a proper diverſity in the quantity of our ſyllables. Our conſonants, he obſerves, which appear ſo crowded to the eye on paper, often form combinations not diſagreeable to the ear in pronouncing, and, in particular, the objection which has been made to the frequent recurrence of the hiſſing conſonant S in our language, is unjuſt and ill-founded. For, it has not been attended to, that very commonly, and in the final ſyllables eſpecially, this letter loſes altogether the hiſſing ſound, and is transformed into a Z, which is one of the ſounds on which the ear reſts with pleaſure; as in *has*, *theſe*, *thoſe*, *loves*, *hears*, and innumerable more, where, though the letter S be retained in writing, it has really the power of Z, not of the common S.

After all, however, it muſt be admitted, that ſmoothneſs, or beauty, of ſound, is none of the diſtinguiſhing properties of the Engliſh tongue. Though not incapable of being formed into melodious arrangements, yet ſtrength and expreſſiveneſs, more than grace, form its character. We incline, in general, to a ſhort pronunciation of our words, and have ſhortened the quantity of moſt of thoſe which we borrow from the Latin, as *orator*, *ſpectacle*, *theatre*, *liberty*, and ſuch like. Agreeable to this, is a remarkable peculiarity of Engliſh pronunciation, the throwing the accent farther back, that is, nearer the beginning of the word, than is done by any other nation. In

Greek and Latin, no word is accented farther back than the third ſyllable from the end, or what is called the antepenult. But, in Engliſh, we have many words accented on the fourth, ſome on the fifth ſyllable from the end, as, *mémorable, convéniency, ámbulatory, prófitableneſs.* The general effect of this practice of haſtening the accent, or placing it ſo near the beginning of a word, is to give a briſk and a ſpirited, but at the ſame time, a rapid and hurried, and not very muſical, tone to the whole pronunciation of a people.

The Engliſh tongue poſſeſſes, undoubtedly, this property, of being the moſt ſimple in its form and conſtruction, of all the European dialects. It is free from all intricacy of caſes, declenſions, moods and tenſes. Its words are ſubject to fewer variations from their original form than thoſe of any other language. Its ſubſtantives have no diſtinction of gender, except what nature has made, and but one variation in caſe. Its adjectives admit of no change at all, except what expreſſes the degree of compariſon. Its verbs, inſtead of running through all the varieties of ancient conjugation, ſuffer no more than four or five changes in termination. By the help of a few prepoſitions and anxiliary verbs, all the purpoſes of ſignificancy in meaning are accompliſhed; while the words, for the moſt part, preſerve their form unchanged. The diſadvantages in point of elegance, brevity, and force, which follow from this ſtructure of our language, I

have before pointed out. But, at the ſame time, it muſt be admitted, that ſuch a ſtructure contributes to facility. It renders the acquiſition of our language leſs laborious, the arrangement of our words more plain and obvious, the rules of our ſyntax fewer and more ſimple.

I agree, indeed, with Dr. Lowth (preface to his grammar), in thinking that this very ſimplicity and facility of our language proves a cauſe of its being frequently written and ſpoken with leſs accuracy. It was neceſſary to ſtudy languages, which were of a more complex and artificial form, with greater care. The marks of gender and caſe, the varieties of conjugation and declenſion, the multiplied rules of ſyntax, were all to be attended to in ſpeech. Hence language became more an object of art. It was reduced into form; a ſtandard was eſtabliſhed; and any departures from the ſtandard became conſpicuous. Whereas, among us, language is hardly conſidered as an object of grammatical rule. We take it for granted, that a competent ſkill in it may be acquired without any ſtudy; and that, in a ſyntax ſo narrow and confined as ours, there is nothing which demands attention. Hence ariſes the habit of writing in a looſe and inaccurate manner.

I admit, that no grammatical rules have ſufficient authority to control the firm and eſtabliſhed uſage of language. Eſtabliſhed cuſtom in ſpeaking and writing, is the ſtandard to which we muſt at laſt reſort for determining every

controverted point in language and ſtyle. But it will not follow from this, that grammatical rules are ſuperſeded as uſeleſs. In every language, which has been in any degree cultivated, there prevails a certain ſtructure and analogy of parts, which is underſtood to give foundation to the moſt reputable uſage of ſpeech; and which, in all caſes, when uſage is looſe or dubious, poſſeſſes conſiderable authority. In every language, there are rules of ſyntax which muſt be inviolably obſerved by all who would either write or ſpeak with any propriety. For ſyntax is no other than that arrangement of words, in a ſentence, which renders the meaning of each word, and the relation of all the words to one another, moſt clear and intelligible.

All the rules of Latin ſyntax, it is true, cannot be applied to our language. Many of thoſe rules aroſe from the particular form of their language, which occaſioned verbs or prepoſitions to govern, ſome the genitive, ſome the dative, ſome the accuſative or ablative caſe. But, abſtracting from theſe peculiarities, it is to be always remembered, that the chief and fundamental rules of ſyntax are common to the Engliſh as well as the Latin tongue; and, indeed, belong equally to all languages. For, in all languages, the parts which compoſe ſpeech are eſſentially the ſame; ſubſtantives, adjectives, verbs, and connecting particles: And wherever theſe parts of ſpeech are found, there are certain neceſſary relations among them, which regulate their ſyntax, or

the place which they ought to poſſeſs in a ſentence. Thus, in Engliſh, juſt as much as in Latin, the adjective muſt, by poſition, be made to agree with its ſubſtantive; and the verb muſt agree with its nominative in perſon and number; becauſe, from the nature of things, a word which expreſſes either a quality or an action, muſt correſpond as cloſely as poſſible with the name of that thing whoſe quality, or whoſe action, it expreſſes. Two or more ſubſtantives, joined by a copulative, muſt always require the verbs or pronouns, to which they refer, to be placed in the plural number; otherwiſe, their common relation to theſe verbs or pronouns is not pointed out. An active verb muſt, in every language, govern the accuſative; that is, clearly point out ſome ſubſtantive noun, as the object to which its action is directed. A relative pronoun muſt, in every form of ſpeech, agree with its antecedent in gender, number, and perſon; and conjunctions, or connecting particles, ought always to couple like caſes and moods; that is, ought to join together words which are of the ſame form and ſtate with each other. I mention theſe as a few exemplifications of that fundamental regard to ſyntax, which, even in ſuch a language as ours, is abſolutely requiſite for writing or ſpeaking with any propriety.

Whatever the advantages, or defects of the Engliſh language be, as it is our own language, it deſerves a high degree of our ſtudy and attention, both with regard to the choice of

words which we employ, and with regard to the ſyntax, or the arrangement of theſe words in a ſentence. We know how much the Greeks and the Romans, in their moſt poliſhed and flouriſhing times, cultivated their own tongues. We know how much ſtudy both the French, and the Italians, have beſtowed upon theirs. Whatever knowledge may be acquired by the ſtudy of other languages, it can never be communicated with advantage, unleſs by ſuch as can write and ſpeak their own language well. Let the matter of an author be ever ſo good and uſeful, his compoſitions will always ſuffer in the public eſteem, if his expreſſion be deficient in purity and propriety. At the ſame time, the attainment of a correct and elegant ſtyle, is an object which demands application and labor. If any imagine they can catch it merely by the ear, or acquire it by a ſlight peruſal of ſome of our good authors, they will find themſelves much diſappointed. The many errors, even in point of grammar, the many offences againſt purity of language, which are committed by writers who are far from being contemptible, demonſtrate, that a careful ſtudy of the language is previouſly requiſite, in all who aim at writing it properly *.

* On this ſubject, the reader ought to peruſe Dr. Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar, with critical notes; which is the grammatical performance of higheſt authority that has appeared in our time, and in which he will ſee, what I have ſaid concerning the inaccuracies in language of ſome of our

beſt writers, fully verified. In Dr. Campbell's Philoſophy of Rhetoric, he will likewiſe find many acute and ingenious obſervations, both on the English language, and on ſtyle in general. And Dr. Prieſtley's Rudiments of English Grammar will alſo be uſeful, by pointing out ſeveral of the errors into which writers are apt to fall.

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LECTURE X.

Style — Perſpicuity and Preciſion.

HAVING finiſhed the ſubject of language, I now enter on the conſideration of ſtyle, and the rules that relate to it.

It is not eaſy to give a preciſe idea of what is meant by ſtyle. The beſt definition I can give of it, is, the peculiar manner in which a man expreſſes his conceptions, by means of language. It is different from mere language or words. The words which an author employs, may be proper and faultleſs; and his ſtyle may, nevertheleſs, have great faults; it may be dry, or ſtiff, or feeble, or affected. Style has always ſome reference to an author's manner of thinking. It is a picture of the ideas which riſe in his mind, and of the manner in which they riſe there; and, hence, when we are examining an author's compoſition, it is, in many caſes, extremely difficult to ſeparate the ſtyle from the ſentiment. No wonder theſe two ſhould be ſo intimately connected, as ſtyle is nothing

elſe, than that ſort of expreſſion which our thoughts moſt readily aſſume. Hence, different countries have been noted for peculiarities of ſtyle, ſuited to their different temper and genius. The eaſtern nations animated their ſtyle with the moſt ſtrong and hyperbolical figures. The Athenians, a poliſhed and acute people, formed a ſtyle accurate, clear, and neat. The Aſiatics, gay and looſe in their manners, affected a ſtyle florid and diffuſe. The like ſort of characteriſtical differences are commonly remarked in the ſtyle of the French, the Engliſh, and the Spaniards. In giving the general characters of ſtyle, it is uſual to talk of a nervous, a feeble, or a ſpirited ſtyle; which are plainly the characters of a writer's manner of thinking, as well as of expreſſing himſelf: So difficult is it to ſeparate theſe two things from one another. Of the general characters of ſtyle, I am afterwards to diſcourſe; but it will be neceſſary to begin with examining the more ſimple qualities of it; from the aſſemblage of which, its more complex denominations, in a great meaſure, reſult.

All the qualities of a good ſtyle may be ranged under two heads, perſpicuity and ornament. For all that can poſſibly be required of language, is, to convey our ideas clearly to the minds of others, and, at the ſame time, in ſuch a dreſs, as by pleaſing and intereſting them, ſhall moſt effectually ſtrengthen the impreſſions which we ſeek to make. When both theſe ends

are anſwered, we certainly accompliſh every purpoſe for which we uſe writing and diſcourſe.

Perſpicuity, it will be readily admitted, is the fundamental quality of ſtyle *; a quality ſo eſſential in every kind of writing, that, for the want of it, nothing can atone. Without this, the richeſt ornaments of ſtyle only glimmer through the dark; and puzzle, inſtead of pleaſing, the reader. This, therefore, muſt be our firſt object, to make our meaning clearly and fully underſtood, and underſtood without the leaſt difficulty. "Oratio," ſays Quinctilian, debet "negligenter quoque audientibus eſſe aperta; "ut in animum audientis, ſicut ſol in oculos "etiamſi in eum non intendatur, occurrat. "Quare, non ſolum ut intelligere poſſit, ſed ne "omnino poſſit non intelligere curandum †." If we are obliged to follow a writer with much care, to pauſe, and to read over his ſentences a ſecond time, in order to comprehend them fully, he will never pleaſe us long. Mankind are too indolent to reliſh ſo much labor. They may

* "Nobis prima ſit virtus, perſpicuitas, propria verba, rectus "ordo, non in longum dilata concluſio; nihil neque deſit, neque "ſuperfluat." QUINCTIL. lib. viii.

† "Diſcourſe ought always to be obvious, even to the moſt "careleſs and negligent hearer; ſo that the ſenſe ſhall ſtrike "his mind, as the light of the ſun does our eyes, though they "are not directed upwards to it. We muſt ſtudy, not only "that every hearer may underſtand us, but that it ſhall be "impoſſible for him not to underſtand us."

pretend to admire the author's depth, after they have diſcovered his meaning; but they will ſeldom be inclined to take up his work a ſecond time.

Authors ſometimes plead the difficulty of their ſubject, as an excuſe for the want of perſpicuity. But the excuſe can rarely, if ever, be ſuſtained. For whatever a man conceives clearly, that it is in his power, if he will be at the trouble, to put into diſtinct propoſitions, to expreſs clearly to others: and upon no ſubject ought any man to write, where he cannot think clearly. His ideas, indeed, may, very excuſably, be on ſome ſubjects incomplete or inadequate; but ſtill, as far as they go, they ought to be clear; and, wherever this is the caſe, perſpicuity, in expreſſing them, is always attainable. The obſcurity which reigns ſo much among many metaphyſical writers, is, for the moſt part, owing to the indiſtinctneſs of their own conceptions. They ſee the object but in a confuſed light; and, of courſe, can never exhibit it in a clear one to others.

Perſpicuity in writing, is not to be conſidered as only a ſort of negative virtue, or freedom from defect. It has higher merit: It is a degree of poſitive beauty. We are pleaſed with an author, we conſider him as deſerving praiſe, who frees us from all fatigue of ſearching for his meaning; who carries us through his ſubject without any embarraſſment or confuſion; whoſe

ſtyle flows always like a limpid ſtream, where we ſee to the very bottom.

The ſtudy of perſpicuity requires attention, firſt, to ſingle words and phraſes, and then to the conſtruction of ſentences. I begin with treating of the firſt, and ſhall confine myſelf to it in this lecture.

Perſpicuity, conſidered with reſpect to words and phraſes, requires theſe three qualities in them; *purity*, *propriety*, and *preciſion*.

Purity and propriety of language, are often uſed indiſcriminately for each other; and, indeed, they are very nearly allied. A diſtinction, however, obtains between them. Purity, is the uſe of ſuch words, and ſuch conſtructions, as belong to the idiom of the language which we ſpeak; in oppoſition to words and phraſes that are imported from other languages, or that are obſolete, or new coined, or uſed without proper authority. Propriety, is the ſelection of ſuch words in the language, as the beſt and moſt eſtabliſhed uſage has appropriated to thoſe ideas which we intend to expreſs by them. It implies the correct and happy application of them, according to that uſage, in oppoſition to vulgariſms or low expreſſions; and to words and phraſes, which would be leſs ſignificant of the ideas that we mean to convey. Style may be pure; that is, it may all be ſtrictly Engliſh, without Scotticiſms or Galliciſms, or ungrammatical irregular expreſſions of any kind, and may, nevertheleſs, be deficient in propriety.

The words may be ill choſen; not adapted to the ſubject, nor fully expreſſive of the author's ſenſe. He has taken all his words and phraſes from the general maſs of Engliſh language; but he has made his ſelection among theſe words unhappily. Whereas, ſtyle cannot be proper without being alſo pure; and where both purity and propriety meet, beſides making ſtyle perſpicuous, they alſo render it graceful. There is no ſtandard, either of purity or of propriety, but the practice of the beſt writers and ſpeakers in the country.

When I mentioned obſolete or new-coined words as incongruous with purity of ſtyle, it will be eaſily underſtood, that ſome exceptions are to be made. On certain occaſions, they may have grace. Poetry admits of greater latitude than proſe, with reſpect to coining, or, at leaſt, new-compounding words; yet, even here, this liberty ſhould be uſed with a ſparing hand. In proſe, ſuch innovations are more hazardous, and have a worſe effect. They are apt to give ſtyle an affected and conceited air; and ſhould never be ventured upon, except by ſuch, whoſe eſtabliſhed reputation gives them ſome degree of dictatorial power over language.

The introduction of foreign and learned words, unleſs where neceſſity requires them, ſhould always be avoided. Barren languages may need ſuch aſſiſtances; but ours is not one of theſe. Dean Swift, one of our moſt correct writers, valued himſelf much on uſing no words

Swift

but ſuch as were of native growth: and his language may, indeed be conſidered as a ſtandard of the ſtricteſt purity and propriety in the choice of words. At preſent, we ſeem to be departing from this ſtandard. A multitude of Latin words have, of late, been poured in upon us. On ſome occaſions, they give an appearance of elevation and dignity to ſtyle. But often alſo, they render it ſtiff and forced: And, in general, a plain native ſtyle, as it is more intelligible to all readers, ſo, by a proper management of words, it can be made equally ſtrong and expreſſive with this Latinized Engliſh.

Let us now conſider the import of preciſion in language, which, as it is the higheſt part of the quality denoted by perſpicuity, merits a full explication; and the more, becauſe diſtinct ideas are, perhaps, not commonly formed about it.

The exact import of preciſion may be drawn from the etymology of the word. It comes from "præcidere," to cut off: It imports retrenching all ſuperfluities, and pruning the expreſſion ſo, as to exhibit neither more nor leſs than an exact copy of his idea who uſes it. I obſerved before, that it is often difficult to ſeparate the qualities of ſtyle from the qualities of thought; and it is found ſo in this inſtance. For, in order to write with preciſion, though this be properly a quality of ſtyle, one muſt poſſeſs a very conſiderable degree of diſtinctneſs and accuracy in his manner of thinking.

The words, which a man uſes to expreſs his ideas, may be faulty in three reſpects: They

may either not expreſs that idea which the author intends, but ſome other which only reſembles, or is a-kin to it; or, they may expreſs that idea, but not quite fully and completely: or, they may expreſs it, together with ſomething more than he intends. Preciſion ſtands oppoſed to all theſe three faults; but chiefly to the laſt. In an author's writing with propriety, his being free of the two former faults ſeems implied. The words which he uſes are proper; that is, they expreſs that idea which he intends, and they expreſs it fully; but to be preciſe, ſignifies, that they expreſs that idea, and no more. There is nothing in his words which introduces any foreign idea, any ſuperfluous unſeaſonable acceſſory, ſo as to mix it confuſedly with the principal object, and thereby to render our conception of that object looſe and indiſtinct. This requires a writer to have, himſelf, a very clear apprehenſion of the object he means to preſent to us; to have laid faſt hold of it in his mind; and never to waver in any one view he takes of it: a perfection to which, indeed, few writers attain.

The uſe and importance of preciſion, may be deduced from the nature of the human mind. It never can view, clearly and diſtinctly, above one object at a time. If it muſt look at two or three together, eſpecially objects among which there is reſemblance or connexion, it finds itſelf confuſed and embarraſſed. It cannot clearly perceive in what they agree, and in what they differ. Thus, were any object, ſuppoſe ſome

animal, to be preſented to me, of whoſe ſtructure I wanted to form a diſtinct notion, I would deſire all its trappings to be taken off, I would require it to be brought before me by itſelf, and to ſtand alone, that there might be nothing to diſtract my attention. The ſame is the caſe with words. If, when you would inform me of your meaning, you alſo tell me more than what conveys it; if you join foreign circumſtances to the principal object; if, by unneceſſarily varying the expreſſion, you ſhift the point of view, and make me ſee ſometimes the object itſelf, and ſometimes another thing that is connected with it; you thereby oblige me to look on ſeveral objects at once, and I loſe ſight of the principal. You load the animal, you are ſhowing me, with ſo many trappings and collars, and bring ſo many of the ſame ſpecies before me, ſomewhat reſembling, and yet ſomewhat differing, that I ſee none of them clearly.

This forms what is called a looſe ſtyle; and is the proper oppoſite to preciſion. It generally ariſes from uſing a ſuperfluity of words. Feeble writers employ a multitude of words to make themſelves underſtood, as they think, more diſtinctly; and they only confound the reader. They are ſenſible of not having caught the preciſe expreſſion, to convey what they would ſignify; they do not, indeed, conceive their own meaning very preciſely themſelves; and, therefore, help it out, as they can, by this and the other word, which may, as they ſuppoſe,

ſupply the defect, and bring you ſomewhat nearer to their idea: They are always going about it, and about it, but never juſt hit the thing. The image as they ſet it before you, is always ſeen double; and no double image is diſtinct. When an author tells me of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle, the expreſſion is preciſe, and I underſtand it fully. But if, from the deſire of multiplying words, he will needs praiſe his *courage* and *fortitude;* at the moment he joins theſe words together, my idea begins to waver. He means to expreſs one quality more ſtrongly; but he is, in truth, expreſſing two. *Courage* reſiſts danger; *fortitude* ſupports pain. The occaſion of exerting each of theſe qualities is different; and being led to think of both together, when only one of them ſhould be in my view, my view is rendered unſteady, and my conception of the object indiſtinct.

From what I have ſaid, it appears that an author may, in a qualified ſenſe, be perſpicuous, while yet he is far from being preciſe. He uſes proper words, and a proper arrangement; he gives you the idea as clear as he conceives it himſelf; and ſo far he is perſpicuous but the ideas are not very clear in his own mind; they are looſe and general; and, therefore, cannot be expreſſed with preciſion. All ſubjects do not equally require preciſion. It is ſufficient, on many occaſions, that we have a general view of the meaning. The ſubject, perhaps, is of the known and familiar kind; and we are in no

hazard of miſtaking the ſenſe of the author, though every word which he uſes be not preciſe and exact.

Few authors, for inſtance, in the Engliſh language, are more clear and perſpicuous, on the whole, than Archbiſhop Tillotſon, and Sir William Temple; yet neither of them are remarkable for preciſion. They are looſe and diffuſe; and accuſtomed to expreſs their meaning by ſeveral words, which ſhow you fully whereabouts it lies, rather than to ſingle out thoſe expreſſions, which would convey clearly the idea they have in view, and no more. Neither, indeed, is preciſion the prevailing character of Mr. Addiſon's ſtyle; although he is not ſo deficient in this reſpect as the other two authors.

Lord Shaftſbury's faults, in point of preciſion, are much greater than Mr. Addiſon's; and the more unpardonable, becauſe he is a profeſſed philoſophical writer; who, as ſuch, ought, above all things, to have ſtudied Preciſion. His ſtyle has both great beauties, and great faults; and, on the whole, is by no means a ſafe model for imitation. Lord Shaftſbury was well acquainted with the power of words; thoſe which he employs are generally proper and well ſounding; he has great variety of them; and his arrangement, as ſhall be afterwards ſhown, is commonly beautiful. His defect, in preciſion, is not owing ſo much to indiſtinct or confuſed ideas, as to perpetual affectation. He is fond, to exceſs, of the pomp and parade

of language; he is never ſatisfied with expreſſing any thing clearly and ſimply; he muſt always give it the dreſs of ſtate and majeſty. Hence perpetual circumlocutions, and many words and phraſes employed to deſcribe ſomewhat, that would have been deſcribed much better by one of them. If he has occaſion to mention any perſon or author, he very rarely mentions him by his proper name. In the treatiſe, entitled, Advice to an Author, he deſcants for two or three pages together upon Ariſtotle, without once naming him in any other way, than the maſter critic, the mighty genius and judge of art, the prince of critics, the grand maſter of art, and conſummate philologiſt. In the ſame way, the grand poetic fire, the philoſophical patriarch, and his diſciple of noble birth, and lofty genius, are the only names by which he condeſcends to diſtinguiſh Homer, Socrates, and Plato, in another paſſage of the ſame treatiſe. This method of diſtinguiſhing perſons is extremely affected; but it is not ſo contrary to preciſion, as the frequent circumlocutions he employs for all moral ideas; attentive, on every occaſion, more to the pomp of language, than to the clearneſs which he ought to have ſtudied as a philoſopher. The moral ſenſe, for inſtance, after he had once defined it, was a clear term; but, how vague becomes the idea, when, in the next page, he calls it, "that "natural affection, and anticipating fancy, which "makes the ſenſe of right and wrong?" Self

examination, or reflection on our own conduct, is an idea conceived with eaſe; but when it is wrought into all the forms of, "a man's di-" viding himſelf into two parties, becoming a " ſelf-dialogiſt, entering into partnerſhip with " himſelf, forming the dual number practically " within himſelf;" we hardly know what to make of it. On ſome occaſions, he ſo adorns, or rather loads with words the plaineſt and ſimpleſt propoſitions, as, if not to obſcure, at leaſt, to enfeeble them.

In the following paragraph, for example, of the Inquiry concerning Virtue, he means to ſhow, that, by every ill action we hurt our mind, as much as one who ſhould ſwallow poiſon, or give himſelf a wound, would hurt his body. Obſerve what a redundancy of words he pours forth: "Now, if the fabric of the mind or " temper appeared to us, ſuch as it really is; " if we ſaw it impoſſible to remove hence any " one good or orderly affection, or to introduce " any ill or diſorderly one, without drawing " on, in ſome degree, that diſſolute ſtate which, " at its height, is confeſſed to be ſo miſerable; " it would then, undoubtedly, be confeſſed, " that ſince no ill, immoral, or unjuſt action, " can be committed, without either a new " inroad and breach on the temper and paſſions, " or a further advancing of that execution " already done; whoever did ill, or acted in " prejudice of his integrity, good-nature, or " worth, would of neceſſity, act with greater

" cruelty towards himſelf, than he who ſcrupled " not to ſwallow what was poiſonous, or who, " with his own hands, ſhould voluntarily mangle " or wound his outward form or conſtitution, " natural limbs or body *." Here, to commit a bad action, is, firſt, " to remove a good and " orderly affection, and to introduce an ill or " diſorderly one;" next, it is, " to commit an " action that is ill, immoral, and unjuſt;" and in the next line, it is, " to do ill, or to act in " prejudice of integrity, good-nature, and worth;" nay, ſo very ſimple a thing as a man's wounding himſelf, is, " to mangle, or wound, his out- " ward form and conſtitution, his natural limbs " or body." Such ſuperfluity of words is diſguſtful to every reader of correct taſte; and ſerves no purpoſe but to embarraſs and perplex the ſenſe. This ſort of ſtyle is elegantly deſcribed by Quinctilian, "eſt in quibuſdam turba inanium verbo- " rum, qui dum communem loquendi morem " reformidant, ducti ſpecie nitoris, circumeunt " omnia copioſa loquacitate quæ dicere volunt †." Lib. vii. cap. 2.

* Characteriſt. Vol. II. p. 85.

† " A crowd of unmeaning words is brought together, by " ſome authors, who, afraid of expreſſing themſelves after " common and ordinary manner, and allured by an appearance " of ſplendor, ſurround every thing which they mean to ſay " with a certain copious loquacity."

The great ſource of a looſe ſtyle, in oppoſition to preciſion, is the injudicious uſe of thoſe words termed ſynonymous. They are called ſynonymous, becauſe they agree in expreſſing one principal idea; but, for the moſt part, if not always, they expreſs it with ſome diverſity in the circumſtances. They are varied by ſome acceſſory idea which every word introduces, and which forms the diſtinction between them. Hardly, in any language, are there two words that convey preciſely the ſame idea; a perſon thoroughly converſant in the propriety of the language, will always be able to obſerve ſomething that diſtinguiſhes them. As they are like different ſhades of the ſame color, an accurate writer can employ them to great advantage, by uſing them, ſo as to heighten and to finiſh the picture which he gives us. He ſupplies by one, what was wanting in the other, to the force, or to the luſtre of the image which he means to exhibit. But, in order to this end, he muſt be extremely attentive to the choice which he makes of them. For the bulk of writers are very apt to confound them with each other; and to employ them careleſsly, merely for the ſake of filling up a period, or of rounding and diverſifying the language, as if their ſignification were exactly the ſame, while, in truth, it is not. Hence a certain miſt, and indiſtinctneſs, is unwarily thrown over ſtyle.

In the Latin language, there are no two words we would more readily take to be

ſynonymous, than *amare* and *diligere*. Cicero, however, has ſhown us, that there is a very clear diſtinction betwixt them, "Quid ergo," ſays he, in one of his epiſtles, "tibi commendem eum "quem tu ipſe diligis? Sed tamen ut ſcires eum "non a me *diligi* ſolum, verum etiam *amari*, "ob eam rem tibi hæc ſcribo*." In the ſame manner *tutus* and *ſecurus*, are words which we would readily confound; yet their meaning is different. *Tutus*, ſignifies out of danger; *ſecurus*, free from the dread of it. Seneca has elegantly marked this diſtinction: "Tuta ſcelera eſſe poſſunt, "ſecura non poſſunt†." In our own language, very many inſtances might be given of a difference in meaning among words reputed ſynonymous; and, as the ſubject is of importance, I ſhall now point out ſome of theſe. The inſtances which I am to give, may themſelves be of uſe; and they will ſerve to ſhow the neceſſity of attending, with care and ſtrictneſs, to the exact import of words, if ever we would write with propriety or precision.

Auſterity, *Severity*, *Rigor*. Auſterity, relates to the manner of living; ſeverity, of thinking; rigor, of puniſhing. To auſterity, is oppoſed effeminacy; to ſeverity, relaxation; to rigor, clemency. A hermit, is auſtere in his life; a caſuiſt, ſevere in his application of religion or law; a judge, rigorous in his ſentences.

* Ad Famil. l. 13. ep. 47.

† Epiſt. 97.

Cuſtom,

Cuſtom, *Habit.* Cuſtom, reſpects the action; habit, the actor. By cuſtom, we mean the frequent repetition of the ſame act; by habit, the effect which that repetition produces on the mind or body. By the cuſtom of walking often on the ſtreets, one acquires a habit of idleneſs.

Surpriſed, *aſtoniſhed*, *amazed*, *confounded.* I am ſurpriſed with what is new or unexpected; I am aſtoniſhed, at what is vaſt or great; I am amazed, with what is incomprehenſible; I am confounded, by what is ſhocking or terrible.

Deſiſt, *renounce*, *quit*, *leave off.* Each of theſe words imply ſome purſuit or object relinquiſhed; but from different motives. We deſiſt from the difficulty of accompliſhing. We renounce, on account of the diſagreeableneſs of the object, or purſuit. We quit, for the ſake of ſome other thing which intereſts us more; and we leave off, becauſe we are weary of the deſign. A politician deſiſts from his deſigns, when he finds they are impracticable; he renounces the court, becauſe he has been affronted by it; he quits ambition for ſtudy or retirement; and leaves off his attendance on the great, as he becomes old and weary of it.

Pride, *Vanity.* Pride makes us eſteem ourſelves; vanity, makes us deſire the eſteem of others. It is juſt to ſay, as Dean Swift has done, that a man is too proud to be vain.

Haughtineſs, *Diſdain.* Haughtineſs, is founded on the high opinion we entertain of ourſelves; diſdain, on the low opinion we have of others.

To diſtinguiſh, to ſeparate. We diſtinguiſh, what we want not to confound with another thing; we ſeparate, what we want to remove from it. Objects are diſtinguiſhed from one another, by their qualities. They are ſeparated, by the diſtance of time or place.

To weary, to fatigue. The continuance of the ſame thing wearies us; labor fatigues us. I am weary with ſtanding; I am fatigued with walking. A ſuitor wearies us by his perſeverance; fatigues us by his importunity.

To abhor, to deteſt. To abhor imports, ſimply, ſtrong diſlike; to deteſt, imports alſo ſtrong diſapprobation. One abhors being in debt; he deteſts treachery.

To invent, to diſcover. We invent things that are new; we diſcover what was before hidden. Galileo invented the teleſcope; Harvey diſcovered the circulation of the blood.

Only, alone. Only, imports that there is no other of the ſame kind; alone, imports being accompanied by no other. An only child, is one who has neither brother nor ſiſter; a child alone, is one who is left by itſelf. There is a difference, therefore, in preciſe language, betwixt theſe two phraſes, "virtue only makes us happy;" and, "virtue alone makes us happy." Virtue only makes us happy, imports, that nothing elſe can do it. Virtue alone makes us happy, imports, that virtue, by itſelf, or unaccompanied with other advantages, is ſufficient to do it.

Entire, complete. A thing is entire, by wanting none of its parts; complete, by wanting none of the appendages that belong to it. A man may have an entire houſe to himſelf; and yet not have one complete apartment.

Tranquillity, Peace, Calm. Tranquillity, reſpects a ſituation free from trouble, conſidered in itſelf; peace, the ſame ſituation with reſpect to any cauſes that might interrupt it; calm, with regard to a diſturbed ſituation going before, or following it. A good man enjoys tranquillity, in himſelf; peace, with others; and calm, after the ſtorm.

A Difficulty, an Obſtacle. A difficulty, embarraſſes; an obſtacle, ſtops us. We remove the one; we ſurmount the other. Generally, the firſt, expreſſes ſomewhat ariſing from the nature and circumſtances of the affair, the ſecond, ſomewhat ariſing from a foreign cauſe. Philip found difficulty in managing the Athenians from the nature of their diſpoſitions; but the eloquence of Demoſthenes was the greateſt obſtacle to his deſigns.

Wiſdom, Prudence. Wiſdom, leads us to ſpeak and act what is moſt proper. Prudence, prevents our ſpeaking or acting improperly. A wiſe man, employs the moſt proper means for ſucceſs, a prudent man, the ſafeſt means for not being brought into danger.

Enough, Sufficient. Enough, relates to the quantity which one wiſhes to have of any thing. Sufficient, relates to the uſe that is to be made of

it. Hence, enough, generally imports a greater quantity than ſufficient does. The covetous man never has enough; although he has what is ſufficient for nature.

To avow, to acknowledge, to confeſs. Each of theſe words imports the affirmation of a fact, but in very different circumſtances. To avow, ſuppoſes the perſon to glory in it; to acknowledge; ſuppoſes a ſmall degree of faultineſs, which the acknowledgment compenſates: to confeſs, ſuppoſes a higher degree of crime. A patriot avows his oppoſition to a bad miniſter, and is applauded; a gentleman acknowledges his miſtake, and is forgiven; a priſoner confeſſes the crime he is accuſed of, and is puniſhed.

To remark, to obſerve. We remark, in the way of attention, in order to remember; we obſerve, in the way of examination, in order to judge. A traveller remarks the moſt ſtriking object he ſees; a general obſerves all the motions of his enemy.

Equivocal, Ambiguous. An equivocal expreſſion is, one which has one ſenſe open, and deſigned to be underſtood; another ſenſe concealed, and underſtood only by the perſon who uſes it. An ambiguous expreſſion is, one which has apparently two ſenſes, and leaves us at a loſs which of them to give it. An equivocal expreſſion is uſed with an intention to deceive; an ambiguous one, when it is uſed with deſign, is, with an intention not to give full information. An honeſt

man will never employ an equivocal expreſſion; a confuſed man may often utter ambiguous ones, without any deſign. I ſhall give only one inſtance more.

With, *By*. Both theſe particles expreſs the connexion between ſome inſtrument, or means of effecting an end, and the agent who employs it: but *with*, expreſſes a more cloſe and immediate connexion; *by*, a more remote one. We kill a man *with* a ſword; he dies *by* violence. The criminal is bound *with* ropes *by* the executioner. The proper diſtinction in the uſe of theſe particles, is elegantly marked in a paſſage of Dr. Robertſon's Hiſtory of Scotland. When one of the old Scottiſh kings was making an inquiry into the tenure *by* which his nobles held their lands, they ſtarted up, and drew their ſwords; "*By* theſe," ſaid they, "we acquired our lands, "and *with* theſe, we will defend them. *By* "theſe, we acquired our lands;" ſignifies the more remote means of acquiſition by force and martial deeds; and, "*with* theſe we will defend "them;" ſignifies the immediate direct inſtrument, the ſword, which they would employ in their defence.

Theſe are inſtances of words, in our language, which, by careleſs writers, are apt to be employed as perfectly ſynonymous, and yet are not ſo. Their ſignifications approach, but are not preciſely the ſame. The more the diſtinction in the meaning of ſuch words is weighed, and

attended to, the more clearly and forcibly ſhall we ſpeak or write *.

From all that has been ſaid on this head, it will now appear, that, in order to write or ſpeak with preciſion, two things are eſpecially requiſite; one, that an author's own ideas be clear and diſtinct; and the other, that he have an exact and full comprehenſion of the force of thoſe words which he employs. Natural genius is here required; labor and attention ſtill more. Dean Swift is one of the authors, in our language, moſt diſtinguiſhed for preciſion of ſtyle. In his writings, we ſeldom or never find vague expreſſions, and ſynonymous words, careleſsly thrown together. His meaning is always clear, and ſtrongly marked.

I had occaſion to obſerve before, that though all ſubjects of writing or diſcourſe demand perſpicuity, yet all do not require the ſame degree of that exact preciſion, which I have endeavoured

* In French, there is a very uſeful treatiſe on this ſubject, the Abbé Girard's *Synonymes François*, in which he has made a large collection of ſuch apparent ſynonymes in the language, and ſhown, with much accuracy, the difference in their ſignification. It were much to be wiſhed, that ſome ſuch work were undertaken for our tongue, and executed with equal taſte and judgment. Nothing would contribute more to preciſe and elegant writing. In the mean time, this French treatiſe may be peruſed with conſiderable profit. It will accuſtom perſons to weigh, with attention, the force of words; and will ſuggeſt ſeveral diſtinctions betwixt ſynonymous terms in our own language, analogous to thoſe which he has pointed out in the French; and, accordingly, ſeveral of the inſtances above given were ſuggeſted by the work of this author.

to explain. It is, indeed, in every ſort of writing, a great beauty to have, at leaſt, ſome meaſure of preciſion, in diſtinction from that looſe profuſion of words which imprints no clear idea on the reader's mind. But we muſt, at the ſame time, be on our guard, leſt too great a ſtudy of preciſion, eſpecially in ſubjects where it is not ſtrictly requiſite, betray us into a dry and barren ſtyle; leſt, from the deſire of pruning too cloſely, we retrench all copiouſneſs and ornament. Some degree of this failing may, perhaps, be remarked in Dean Swift's ſerious works. Attentive only to exhibit his ideas clear and exact, reſting wholly on his ſenſe and diſtinctneſs, he appears to reject, diſdainfully, all embelliſhment which, on ſome occaſions, may be thought to render his manner ſomewhat hard and dry. To unite together copiouſneſs and preciſion, to be flowing and graceful, and, at the ſame time, correct and exact in the choice of every word, is, no doubt, one of the higheſt and moſt difficult attainments in writing. Some kinds of compoſition may require more of copiouſneſs and ornament; others, more of preciſion and accuracy; nay, in the ſame compoſition, the different parts of it may demand a proper variation of manner. But we muſt ſtudy never to ſacrifice, totally, any one of theſe qualities to the other; and, by a proper management, both of them may be made fully conſiſtent, if our own ideas be preciſe, and our knowledge and ſtock of words be, at the ſame time, extenſive.

LECTURE XI.

Structure of Sentences.

HAVING begun to treat of ſtyle, in the laſt lecture I conſidered its fundamental quality, perſpicuity. What I have ſaid of this, relates chiefly to the choice of words. From words I proceed to ſentences; and as, in all writing and diſcourſe, the proper compoſition and ſtructure of ſentences is of the higheſt importance, I ſhall treat of this fully. Though perſpicuity be the general head under which I, at preſent, conſider language, I ſhall not confine myſelf to this quality alone, in ſentences, but ſhall inquire alſo, what is requiſite for their grace and beauty: that I may bring together, under one view, all that ſeems neceſſary to be attended to in the conſtruction and arrangement of words in a ſentence.

It is not eaſy to give an exact definition of a ſentence, or period, farther, than as it always implies ſome one complete propoſition or enunciation of thought. Ariſtotle's definition is,

in the main, a good one: "Λεξις εχουσα αρχην και "τελευτην καθ' αυτην και μεγεθος ευσυνοπτον:" "A form "of ſpeech which has a beginning and an end "within itſelf, and is of ſuch a length as to be eaſily "comprehended at once." This, however, admits of great latitude. For a ſentence, or period, conſiſts always of component parts, which are called its members; and as theſe members may be either few or many, and may be connected in ſeveral different ways, the ſame thought, or mental propoſition, may often be either brought into one ſentence, or ſplit into two or three, without the material breach of any rule.

The firſt variety that occurs in the conſideration of ſentences, is, the diſtinction of long and ſhort ones. The preciſe length of ſentences, as to the number of words, or the number of members, which may enter into them, cannot be aſcertained by any definite meaſure. Only, it is obvious, there may be an extreme on either ſide. Sentences, immoderately long, and conſiſting of too many members, always tranſgreſs ſome one or other of the rules which I ſhall mention ſoon, as neceſſary to be obſerved in every good ſentence. In diſcourſes that are to be ſpoken, regard muſt be had to the eaſineſs of pronunciation, which is not conſiſtent with too long periods. In compoſitions where pronunciation has no place, ſtill, however, by uſing long periods too frequently, an author overloads the reader's ear, and fatigues his attention.

For long periods require, evidently, more attention than ſhort ones, in order to perceive clearly the connexion of the ſeveral parts, and to take in the whole at one view. At the ſame time, there may be an exceſs in too many ſhort ſentences alſo; by which the ſenſe is ſplit and broken, the connexion of thought weakened, and the memory burdened, by preſenting to it a long ſucceſſion of minute objects.

With regard to the length and conſtruction of ſentences, the French critics make a very juſt diſtinction of ſtyle, into *ſtyle périodique*, and *ſtyle coupé*. The *ſtyle périodique* is, where the ſentences are compoſed of ſeveral members linked together, and hanging upon one another, ſo that the ſenſe of the whole is not brought out till the cloſe. This is the moſt pompous, muſical, and oratorical manner of compoſing; as in the following ſentence of Sir William Temple: "If you look about you, and conſider "the lives of others as well as your own; if "you think how few are born with honor, and "how many die without name or children; how "little beauty we ſee, and how few friends we "hear; how many diſeaſes, and how much "poverty there is in the world; you will fall "down upon your knees, and, inſtead of re-"pining at one affliction, will admire ſo many "bleſſings which you have received from the "hand of God." (Letter to Lady Eſſex.) Cicero abounds with ſentences conſtructed after this manner.

The *ſtyle coupé* is, where the ſenſe is formed into ſhort independent propoſitions, each complete within itſelf; as in the following of Mr. Pope: "I confeſs, it was want of conſideration "that made me an author. I writ, becauſe it "amuſed me. I corrected, becauſe it was as "pleaſant to me to correct as to write. I publiſhed, "becauſe, I was told, I might pleaſe ſuch as it "was a credit to pleaſe." (Preface to his works.) This is very much the French method of writing; and always ſuits gay and eaſy ſubjects. The *ſtyle périodique*, gives an air of gravity and dignity to compoſition. The *ſtyle coupé*, is more lively and ſtriking. According to the nature of the compoſition, therefore, and the general character it ought to bear, the one or other may be predominant. But, in almoſt every kind of compoſition, the great rule is to intermix them. For the ear tires of either of them when too long continued: Whereas, by a proper mixture of long and ſhort periods, the ear is gratified, and a certain ſprightlineſs is joined with majeſty in our ſtyle. "Non ſemper," ſays Cicero (deſcribing very expreſſively, theſe two different kinds of ſtyles, of which I have been ſpeaking,) "non ſemper utendum eſt perpetuitate, & quaſi converſione verborum; ſed ſæpe carpenda membris minutioribus oratio eſt *.

* "It is not proper always to employ a continued train, and a ſort of regular compaſs of phraſes; but ſtyle ought to be often broken down into ſmaller members."

This variety is of ſo great conſequence, that it muſt be ſtudied, not only in the ſucceſſion of long and ſhort ſentences, but in the ſtructure of our ſentences alſo. A train of ſentences, conſtructed in the ſame manner, and with the ſame number of members, whether long or ſhort, ſhould never be allowed to ſucceed one another. However muſical each of them may be, it has a better effect to introduce even a diſcord, than to cloy the ear with the repetition of ſimilar ſounds: For, nothing is ſo tireſome as perpetual uniformity. In this article of the conſtruction and diſtribution of his ſentences, Lord Shaftsbury has ſhown great art. In the laſt lecture, I obſerved, that he is often guilty of ſacrificing preciſion of ſtyle to pomp of expreſſion; and that there runs through his whole manner, a ſtiffneſs and affectation, which render him very unfit to be conſidered as a general model. But, as his ear was fine, and as he was extremely attentive to every thing that is elegant, he has ſtudied the proper intermixture of long and ſhort ſentences; with variety and harmony in their ſtructure, more than any other Engliſh author; and for this part of compoſition he deſerves attention.

From theſe general obſervations, let us now deſcend to a more particular conſideration of the qualities that are required to make a ſentence perfect. So much depends upon the proper conſtruction of ſentences, that, in every ſort of compoſition, we cannot be too ſtrict in our

attention to it. For, be the ſubject what it will, if the ſentences be conſtructed in a clumſy, perplexed, or feeble manner, it is impoſſible that a work, compoſed of ſuch ſentences, can be read with pleaſure, or even with profit. Whereas, by giving attention to the rules which relate to this part of ſtyle, we acquire the habit of expreſſing ourſelves with perſpicuity and elegance; and, if a diſorder chance to ariſe in ſome of our ſentences, we immediately ſee where it lies, and are able to rectify it *.

The properties moſt eſſential to a perfect ſentence, ſeem to me, the four following: 1. Clearneſs and preciſion. 2. Unity. 3. Strength. 4. Harmony. Each of theſe I ſhall illuſtrate ſeparately, and at ſome length.

The firſt is, clearneſs and preciſion. The leaſt failure here, the leaſt degree of ambiguity, which leaves the mind in any ſort of ſuſpenſe as

* On the ſtructure of ſentences, the ancients appear to have beſtowed a great deal of attention and care. The treatiſe of Demetrius Phalereus, περι Ερμηνειας, abounds with obſervations upon the choice and collocation of words carried to ſuch a degree of nicety, as would frequently ſeem to us minute. The treatiſe of Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, περι συνθεσεως ονοματων, is more maſterly; but is chiefly confined to the muſical ſtructure of periods; a ſubject, for which the Greek language afforded much more aſſiſtance to their writers, than our tongue admits. On the arrangement of words, in English ſentences, the xviiith chapter of Lord Kaim's Elements of Criticiſm ought to be conſulted; and alſo, the 2d Volume of Dr. Campbell's Philoſophy of Rhetoric.

to the meaning, ought to be avoided with the greateſt care; nor is it ſo eaſy a matter to keep always clear of this, as one might, at firſt, imagine. Ambiguity ariſes from two cauſes: either from a wrong choice of words, or a wrong collocation of them. Of the choice of words, as far as regards perſpicuity, I treated fully in the laſt lecture. Of the collocation of them, I am now to treat. The firſt thing to be ſtudied here, is, to obſerve exactly the rules of grammar; as far as theſe can guide us. But as the grammar of our language is not extenſive, there may often be an ambiguous collocation of words, where there is no tranſgreſſion of any grammatical rule. The relations which the words, or members of a period, bear to one another, cannot be pointed out in Engliſh, as in the Greek or Latin, by means of termination; it is aſcertained only by the poſition in which they ſtand. Hence a capital rule in the arrangement of ſentences is, that the words or members moſt nearly related, ſhould be placed in the ſentence as near to each other as poſſible; ſo as to make their mutual relation clearly appear. This is a rule not always obſerved, even by good writers, as ſtrictly as it ought to be. It will be neceſſary to produce ſome inſtances, which will both ſhow the importance of this rule, and make the application of it be underſtood.

Firſt, in the poſition of adverbs, which are uſed to qualify the ſignification of ſomething which either precedes or follows them; there is

often a good deal of nicety. "By greatneſs," ſays Mr. Addiſon, in the Spectator, No. 412, "I do not only mean the bulk of any ſingle "object, but the largeneſs of a whole view." Here the place of the adverb *only*, renders it a limitation of the following word, *mean*. "I do "not only mean." The queſtion may then be put, What does he more than mean? Had he placed it after *bulk*, ſtill it would have been wrong. "I do not mean the *bulk only* of any "ſingle object." For we might then aſk, What does he mean more than the bulk? Is it the color? Or any other property? Its proper place, undoubtedly, is, after the word *object*. "By greatneſs, I do not mean the bulk of any "ſingle object only;" for then, when we put the queſtion, What more does he mean than the bulk of a ſingle object? The anſwer comes out exactly as the author intends, and gives it; "The largeneſs of a whole view."—"Theiſm," ſays Lord Shaftſbury, "can only be oppoſed "to polytheiſm, or atheiſm." Does he mean that theiſm is capable of nothing elſe, except being oppoſed to polytheiſm or atheiſm? This is what his words literally import, through the wrong collocation of *only*. He ſhould have ſaid, "Theiſm can be oppoſed only to polytheiſm or "atheiſm." — In like manner, Dean Swift (Project for the Advancement of Religion), "The "Romans underſtood liberty, at leaſt, as well "as we." Theſe words are capable of two different ſenſes, according as the emphaſis, in

reading them, is laid upon *liberty*, or upon *at leaſt*. In the firſt caſe, they will ſignify, that whatever other things we may underſtand better than the Romans, *liberty*, at leaſt, was one thing which they underſtood as well as we. In the ſecond caſe, they will import, that liberty was underſtood, *at leaſt* as well by them as by us; meaning, that by them it was better underſtood. If this laſt, as I make no doubt, was Dean Swift's own meaning, the ambiguity would have been avoided, and the ſenſe rendered independent of the manner of pronouncing, by arranging the words thus: "The Romans underſtood liberty as well, at leaſt, as we." The fact is, with reſpect to ſuch adverbs, as, *only*, *wholly*, *at leaſt*, and the reſt of that tribe, that in common diſcourſe, the tone and emphaſis we uſe in pronouncing them, generally ſerves to ſhow their reference, and to make the meaning clear; and hence, we acquire a habit of throwing them in looſely in the courſe of a period. But, in writing, where a man ſpeaks to the eye, and not to the ear, he ought to be more accurate; and ſo to connect thoſe adverbs with the words which they qualify, as to put his meaning out of doubt upon the firſt inſpection.

Secondly, When a circumſtance is interpoſed in the middle of a ſentence, it ſometimes requires attention how to place it, ſo as to diveſt it of all ambiguity. For inſtance: "Are "theſe deſigns" (ſays Lord Bolingbroke, Diſſert on Parties, dedicat.) "Are theſe deſigns which "any

" any man, who is born a Briton, in any cir-
" cumſtances, in any ſituation, ought to be
" aſhamed or afraid to avow?" Here we are left at a loſs, whether theſe words, " *in any cir-*
" *cumſtances, in any ſituation*," are connected with, " a man born in Britain, in any circum-
" ſtances, or ſituation," or with that man's
" avowing his deſigns, in any circumſtances, or
" ſituation, into which he may be brought?" If the latter, as ſeems moſt probable, was intended to be the meaning, the arrangement ought to have been conducted thus: " Are theſe deſigns,
" which any man who is born a Briton, ought
" to be aſhamed or afraid, in any circumſtances,
" in any ſituation, to avow?" But,

Thirdly, Still more attention is required to the proper diſpoſition of the relative pronouns, *who*, *which*, *what*, *whoſe*, and of all thoſe particles which expreſs the connexion of the parts of ſpeech with one another. As all reaſoning depends upon this connexion, we cannot be too accurate and preciſe here. A ſmall error may overcloud the meaning of the whole ſentence; and even, where the meaning is intelligible, yet where theſe relative particles are out of their proper place, we always find ſomething awkward and disjointed in the ſtructure of the ſentence. Thus, in the Spectator (N°. 51) " This kind of wit," ſays Mr. Addiſon, " was
" very much in vogue among our countrymen,
" about an age or two ago, who did not

" practiſe it for any oblique reaſon, but purely " for the ſake of being witty." We are at no loſs about the meaning here; but the conſtruction would evidently be mended by diſpoſing of the circumſtance, " about an age or two ago," in ſuch a manner as not to ſeparate the relative *who*, from its antecedent *our countrymen;* in this way: " About an age or two ago, this kind " of wit was very much in vogue among our " countrymen, who did not practiſe it for any " oblique reaſon, but purely for the ſake of being " witty." Spectator, N°. 412. " We no where " meet with a more glorious and pleaſing ſhow " in nature, than what appears in the heavens at " the riſing and ſetting of the ſun, *which* is wholly " made up of theſe different ſtains of light, that " ſhow themſelves in clouds of a different ſitua- tion." *Which* is here deſigned to connect with the word *ſhow*, as its antecedent; but it ſtands ſo wide from it, that without a careful attention to the ſenſe, we would be naturally led, by the rules of ſyntax, to refer it to the riſing and ſetting of the ſun, or to the ſun itſelf; and, hence, an indiſtinctneſs is thrown over the whole ſentence. The following paſſage in Biſhop Sherlock's Sermons (Vol. II. Ser. 15.) is ſtill more cenſurable: " It is folly to pretend to arm ourſelves againſt " the accidents of life, by heaping up treaſures " which nothing can protect us againſt, but the good " providence of our heavenly father." *Which*, " always refers grammatically to the immediately-

preceding ſubſtantive, which here is, "treaſures;" and this would make nonſenſe of the whole period. Every one feels this impropriety. The ſentence ought to have ſtood thus: "It is folly to "pretend, by heaping up treaſures, to arm "ourſelves againſt the accidents of life, which "nothing can protect us againſt but the good "providence of our heavenly father."

Of the like nature is the following inaccuracy of Dean Swift's. He is recommending to young clergymen, to write their ſermons fully and diſtinctly. "Many," ſays he, "act ſo di-"rectly contrary to this method, that, from a "habit of ſaving time and paper, which they "acquired at the univerſity, they write in ſo di-"minutive a manner, that they can hardly read "what they have written." He certainly does not mean, that they had acquired time and paper at the univerſity, but that they had acquired this habit there; and therefore his words ought to have run thus: "from a habit which they "have acquired at the univerſity of ſaving time "and paper, they write in ſo diminutive a man-"ner." In another paſſage, the ſame author has left his meaning altogether uncertain, by miſplacing a relative. It is in the concluſion of his letter to a member of parliament, concerning the ſacramental teſt: "Thus I have fairly given you, "Sir, my own opinion, as well as that of a "great majority of both houſes here, relating to "this weighty affair; upon which I am confident

" you may ſecurely reckon." Now I aſk, what it is he would have his correſpondent to reckon upon, ſecurely? The natural conſtruction leads to theſe words, " this weighty affair." But, as it would be difficult to make any ſenſe of this, it is more probable he meant that the majority of both houſes might be ſecurely reckoned upon; though certainly this meaning, as the words are arranged, is obſcurely expreſſed. The ſentence would be amended by arranging it thus: " Thus, Sir, I " have given you my own opinion, relating to " this weighty affair, as well as that of a great " majority of both houſes here; upon which I " am confident you may ſecurely reckon."

Several other inſtances might be given; but I reckon thoſe which I have produced ſufficient to make the rule underſtood; that, in the conſtruction of ſentences, one of the firſt things to be attended to, is, the marſhalling of the words in ſuch order as ſhall moſt clearly mark the relation of the ſeveral parts of the ſentence to one another; particularly, that adverbs ſhall always be made to adhere cloſely to the words which they are intended to qualify; that, where a circumſtance is thrown in, it ſhall never hang looſe in the midſt of a period, but be determined by its place to one or other member of it; and that every relative word which is uſed, ſhall inſtantly preſent its antecedent to the mind of the reader, without the leaſt obſcurity. I have mentioned theſe three caſes, becauſe I think

they are the moſt frequent occaſions of ambiguity creeping into ſentences.

With regard to relatives, I muſt farther obſerve, that obſcurity often ariſes from the too frequent repetition of them, particularly of the pronouns *who*, and *they*, and *them*, and *theirs*, when we have occaſion to refer to different perſons; as, in the following ſentence of Archbiſhop Tillotſon (vol. I. ſerm. 42.): "Men look "with an evil eye upon the good that is in "others; and think that their reputation obſcur-"es them, and their commendable qualities "ſtand in their light; and therefore they do "what they can to caſt a cloud over them, that "the bright ſhining of their virtues may not "obſcure them." This is altogether careleſs writing. It renders ſtyle often obſcure, always embarraſſed and inelegant. When we find theſe perſonal pronouns crowding too faſt upon us, we have often no method left, but to throw the whole ſentence into ſome other form, which may avoid thoſe frequent references to perſons who have before been mentioned.

All languages are liable to ambiguities. Quinctilian gives us ſome inſtances in the Latin, ariſing from faulty arrangement. A man, he tells us, ordered, by his will, to have erected for him, after his death, "ſtatuam auream haſtam "tenentem;" upon which aroſe a diſpute at law, whether the whole ſtatue, or the ſpear only, was to be of gold? The ſame author obſerves, very properly, that a ſentence is always faulty,

when the collocation of the words is ambiguous, though the ſenſe can be gathered. If any one ſhould ſay, "Chremetem audivi percuſſiſſe De-"meam," this is ambiguous both in ſenſe and ſtructure, whether Chremes or Demea gave the blow. But if this expreſſion were uſed, "ſe "vidiſſe hominem librum ſcribentem," although the meaning be clear, yet Quinctilian inſiſts that the arrangement is wrong. "Nam," ſays he, "etiamſi librum ab homine ſcribi pateat, non "certe hominem a libro, male tamen compo-"ſuerat, feceratque ambiguum quantum in ipſo "fuit." Indeed, to have the relation of every word and member of a ſentence marked in the moſt proper and diſtinct manner, gives not clearneſs only, but grace and beauty to a ſentence, making the mind paſs ſmoothly and agreeably along all the parts of it.

I proceed now to the ſecond quality of a well-arranged ſentence, which I termed its unity. This is a capital property. In every compoſition, of whatever kind, ſome degree of unity is required, in order to render it beautiful. There muſt be always ſome connecting principle among the parts. Some one object muſt reign and be predominant. This, as I ſhall hereafter ſhow, holds in hiſtory, in epic and dramatic poetry, and in all orations. But moſt of all, in a ſingle ſentence, is required the ſtricteſt unity. For the very nature of a ſentence implies one propoſition to be expreſſed. It may conſiſt of parts, indeed; but theſe parts muſt be ſo cloſely bound together,

examples from lit

as to make the impreſſion upon the mind, of one object, not of many. Now, in order to preſerve this unity of a ſentence, the following rules muſt be obſerved:

In the firſt place, during the courſe of the ſentence, the ſcene ſhould be changed as little as poſſible. We ſhould not be hurried by ſudden tranſitions from perſon to perſon, nor from ſubject to ſubject. There is commonly, in every ſentence, ſome perſon or thing, which is the governing word. This ſhould be continued ſo, if poſſible, from the beginning to the end of it. Should I expreſs myſelf thus: "After we came to anchor, "they put me on ſhore, where I was welcomed "by all my friends, who received me with the "greateſt kindneſs." In this ſentence, though the objects contained in it have a ſufficient connexion with each other, yet, by this manner of repreſenting them, by ſhifting ſo often both the place and the perſon, *we*, and *they*, and *I*, and *who*, they appear in ſuch a diſunited view, that the ſenſe of connexion is almoſt loſt. The ſentence is reſtored to its proper unity, by turning it after the following manner: "Having "come to an anchor, I was put on ſhore, where "I was welcomed by all my friends, and re-"ceived with the greateſt kindneſs." Writers who tranſgreſs this rule, for the moſt part tranſgreſs, at the ſame time,

A ſecond rule; never to crowd into one ſentence, things which have ſo little connexion, that they could bear to be divided into two or

three ſentences. The violation of this rule never fails to hurt, and diſpleaſe a reader. Its effect, indeed, is ſo bad, that, of the two, it is the ſafeſt extreme, to err rather by too many ſhort ſentences, than by one that is overloaded and embarraſſed. Examples abound in authors. I ſhall produce ſome, to juſtify what I now ſay. "Archbiſhop Tillotſon," ſays an author of the hiſtory of England, "died in this year. He "was exceedingly beloved both by King Willi- "am and Queen Mary, who nominated Dr. "Tenniſon, Biſhop of Lincoln, to ſucceed him." Who would expect the latter part of this ſentence to follow, in conſequence of the former? "He was exceedingly beloved by both King and "Queen," is the propoſition of the ſentence: we look for ſome proof of this, or at leaſt ſomething related to it, to follow; when we are on a ſudden carried off to a new propoſition, "who nominated Dr. Tenniſon to ſucceed him." The following is from Middleton's Life of Cicero: "In this uneaſy ſtate, both of his public and "private life, Cicero was oppreſſed by a new "and cruel affliction, the death of his beloved "daughter Tullia; which happened ſoon after "her divorce from Dolabella; whoſe manners "and humors were entirely diſagreeable to her." The principal object in this ſentence is, the death of Tullia, which was the cauſe of her father's affliction; the date of it, as happening ſoon after her divorce from Dolabella, may enter into the ſentence with propriety; but

the ſubjunction of Dolabella's character is foreign to the main object; and breaks the unity and compactneſs of the ſentence totally, by ſetting a new picture before the reader. The following ſentence, from a tranſlation of Plutarch, is ſtill worſe: "Their march," ſays the author, ſpeaking of the Greeks under Alexander, "their "march was through an uncultivated country, "whoſe ſavage inhabitants fared hardly, having "no other riches than a breed of lean ſheep, "whoſe fleſh was rank and unſavoury, by reaſon "of their continual feeding upon ſea-fiſh." Here the ſcene is changed upon us again and again. The march of the Greeks, the deſcription of the inhabitants through whoſe country they travelled, the account of their ſheep, and the cauſe of their ſheep being ill-taſted food, form a jumble of objects, ſlightly related to each other, which the reader cannot, without much difficulty, comprehend under one view.

Theſe examples have been taken from ſentences of no great length, yet over-crowded. Authors who deal in long ſentences, are very apt to be faulty in this article. One need only open Lord Clarendon's Hiſtory, to find examples every where. The long, involved, and intricate ſentences of that author, are the greateſt blemiſh of his compoſition; though, in other reſpects, as a hiſtorian, he has conſiderable merit. In later, and more correct writers than Lord Clarendon, we find a period ſometimes running out ſo far, and comprehending ſo many particulars,

as to be more properly a diſcourſe than a ſentence. Take, for an inſtance, the following from Sir William Temple, in his Eſſay upon Poetry: "The uſual acceptation takes profit and pleaſure "for two different things; and not only calls the "followers or votaries of them by the ſeveral "names of buſy and idle men; but diſtinguiſhes "the faculties of the mind, that are converſant "about them, calling the operations of the firſt, "wiſdom; and of the other, wit; which is a "Saxon word, uſed to expreſs what the Spaniards "and Italians call *ingenio*, and the French, "*eſprit*, both from the Latin; though I think "wit more particularly ſignifies that of poetry, "as may occur in remarks on the Runic lan-"guage." When one arrives at the end of ſuch a puzzled ſentence, he is ſurpriſed to find himſelf got to ſo great a diſtance from the object with which he at firſt ſet out.

Lord Shaftſbury, often betrayed into faults by his love of magnificence, ſhall afford us the next example. It is in his Rhapſody, where he is deſcribing the cold regions: "At length," ſays he, "the ſun approaching, melts the ſnow, ſets "longing men at liberty, and affords them means "and time to make proviſion againſt the next "return of cold." This firſt ſentence is correct enough; but he goes on: "It breaks the icy fet-"ters of the main, where vaſt ſea-monſters pierce "through floating iſlands, with arms which can "withſtand the cryſtal rock; whilſt others, who "of themſelves ſeem great as iſlands, are by their

" bulk alone armed againſt all but man, whoſe " ſuperiority over creatures of ſuch ſtupendous ſize " and force, ſhould make him mindful of his privi- " lege of reaſon, and force him humbly to adore " the great compoſer of theſe wondrous frames, " and the author of his own ſuperior wiſdom." Nothing can be more unhappy or embarraſſed than this ſentence; the worſe too, as it is intended to be deſcriptive, where every thing ſhould be clear. It forms no diſtinct image whatever. The *it*, at the beginning, is ambiguous whether it mean the ſun or the cold. The object is changed three times in the ſentence; beginning with the ſun, which breaks the icy fetters of the main; then the Sea-monſters become the principal perſonages; and laſtly, by a very unexpected tranſition, man is brought into view, and receives a long and ſerious admonition before the ſentence cloſes. I do not at preſent inſiſt on the impropriety of ſuch expreſſions as, *God's being the compoſer of frames;* and the ſea-monſters having *arms that withſtand rocks.* Shaftſbury's ſtrength lay in reaſoning and ſentiment, more than in deſcription; however much his deſcriptions have been ſometimes admired.

I ſhall only give one inſtance more on this head, from Dean Swift; in his propoſal, too, for correcting the Engliſh language: where, in place of a ſentence, he has given a looſe diſſertation upon ſeveral ſubjects. Speaking of the progreſs or our language, after the time of Cromwell: " To " this ſucceeded," ſays he, " that licentiouſneſs,

" which entered with the reſtoration, and, " from infecting our religion and morals, fell to " corrupt our language; which laſt was not like " to be much improved by thoſe, who at that " time made up the court of King Charles the " ſecond; either ſuch as had followed him in " his baniſhment, or who had been altogether " converſant in the dialect of theſe fanatic times; " or young men, who had been educated in the " ſame country: ſo that the court, which uſed " to be the ſtandard of correctneſs and propriety " of ſpeech, was then, and I think has ever ſince " continued, the worſt ſchool in England for that " accompliſhment; and ſo will remain, till better " care be taken in the education of our nobility, " that they may ſet out into the world with " ſome foundation of literature, in order to qualify " them for patterns of politeneſs:" How many different facts, reaſonings, and obſervations, are here preſented to the mind at once! and yet ſo linked together by the author, that they all make parts of a ſentence, which admits of no greater diviſion in pointing, than a ſemicolon between any of its members? Having mentioned pointing, I ſhall here take notice, that it is in vain to propoſe, by arbitrary punctuation, to amend the defects of a ſentence, to correct its ambiguity, or to prevent its confuſion. For commas, colons, and points, do not make the proper diviſions of thought; but only ſerve to mark thoſe which ariſe from the tenor of the author's expreſſion: and therefore, they are proper or not, juſt

according as they correſpond to the natural diviſions of the ſenſe. When they are inſerted in wrong places, they deſerve, and will meet with, no regard.

I proceed to a third rule, for preſerving the unity of ſentences; which is to keep clear of all parentheſes in the middle of them. On ſome occaſions, theſe may have a ſpirited appearance; as prompted by a certain vivacity of thought, which can glance happily aſide, as it is going along. But, for the moſt part, their effect is extremely bad; being a ſort of wheels within wheels; ſentences in the midſt of ſentences; the perplexed method of diſpoſing of ſome thought, which a writer wants art to introduce in its proper place. It were needleſs to give many inſtances, as they occur ſo often among incorrect writers. I ſhall produce one from Lord Bolingbroke, the rapidity of whoſe genius, and manner of writing, betrays him frequently into inaccuracies of this ſort. It is in the introduction to his Idea of a Patriot King, where he writes thus: "It "ſeems to me, that, in order to maintain the "ſyſtem of the world, at a certain point, far "below that of ideal perfection (for we are made "capable of conceiving what we are incapable of "attaining), but however, ſufficient, upon the "whole, to conſtitute a ſtate eaſy and happy, "or at the worſt, tolerable; I ſay, it ſeems to "me, that the author of nature has thought "fit to mingle, from time to time, among the "ſocieties of men, a few, and but a few, of

" thoſe on whom he is graciouſly pleaſed to be-
" ſtow a larger portion of the ethereal ſpirit,
" than is given, in the ordinary courſe of his
" government, to the ſons of men." A very bad ſentence this; into which, by the help of a parentheſis, and other interjected circumſtances, his Lordſhip had contrived to thruſt ſo many things, that he is forced to begin the conſtruction again with the phraſe *I ſay*; which, whenever it occurs, may be always aſſumed as a ſure mark of a clumſy ill-conſtructed ſentence; excuſable in ſpeaking, where the greateſt accuracy is not expected, but in poliſhed writing, unpardonable.

I ſhall add only one rule more for the unity of a ſentence, which is, to bring it always to a full and perfect cloſe. Every thing that is one, ſhould have a beginning, a middle, and an end. I need not take notice, that an unfiniſhed ſentence is no ſentence at all, according to any grammatical rule. But very often we meet with ſentences that are, ſo to ſpeak, more than finiſhed. When we have arrived at what we expected was to be the concluſion, when we have come to the word on which the mind is naturally led, by what went before, to reſt; unexpectedly, ſome circumſtance pops out, which ought to have been omitted, or to have been diſpoſed of elſewhere; but which is left lagging behind, like a tail adjected to the ſentence; ſomewhat that, as Mr. Pope deſcribes the Alexandrine line,

" Like a wounded ſnake, drags its ſlow length along."

All theſe adjections to the proper cloſe, diſfigure a ſentence extremely. They give it a lame, ungraceful air, and, in particular, they break its unity. Dean Swift, for inſtance, in his Letter to a Young Clergyman, ſpeaking of Cicero's writings, expreſſes himſelf thus: "With theſe "writings, young divines are more converſant, "than with thoſe of Demoſthenes, who, by "many degrees, excelled the other; at leaſt, as "an orator." Here the natural cloſe of the ſentence is at theſe words, "excelled the other." Theſe words conclude the propoſition; we look for no more; and the circumſtance added, "at "leaſt, as an orator," comes in with a very halting pace. How much more compact would the ſentence have been, if turned thus: "With "theſe writings, young divines are more con-"verſant, than with thoſe of Demoſthenes, "who, by many degrees, as an orator at leaſt, "excelled the other." In the following ſentence, from Sir William Temple, the adjection to the ſentence is altogether foreign to it. Speaking of Burnet's Theory of the Earth, and Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds, "the firſt," ſays he, "could not end his learned treatiſe, without a "panegyric of modern learning, in compariſon "of the ancient; and the other, falls ſo groſsly "into the cenſure of the old poetry, and pre-"ference of the new, that I could not read "either of theſe ſtrains without ſome indigna-"tion; which no quality among men is ſo apt

" to raiſe in me as ſelf-ſufficiency." The word " indignation," concluded the ſentence; the laſt member, " which no quality among men is ſo apt to raiſe in me as ſelf-ſufficiency," is a propoſition altogether new, added after the proper cloſe.

LECTURE XII.

Structure of Sentences.

HAVING treated of perſpicuity and unity, as neceſſary to be ſtudied in the ſtructure of ſentences, I proceed to the third quality of a correct ſentence, which I termed ſtrength. By this, I mean, ſuch a diſpoſition of the ſeveral words and members, as ſhall bring out the ſenſe to the beſt advantage; as ſhall render the impreſſion, which the period is deſigned to make, moſt full and complete; and give every word, and every member, its due weight and force. The two former qualities of perſpicuity and unity, are, no doubt, abſolutely neceſſary to the production of this effect; but more is ſtill requiſite. For a ſentence may be clear enough; it may alſo be compact enough, in all its parts, or have the requiſite unity; and yet, by ſome unfavorable circumſtance in the ſtructure, it may fail in that ſtrength or livelineſs of impreſſion, which a more happy arrangement would have produced.

The firſt rule which I ſhall give, for promoting the ſtrength of a ſentence, is, to prune it

of all redundant words. Theſe may, ſometimes, be conſiſtent with a conſiderable degree both of clearneſs and unity; but they are always enfeebling. They make the ſentence move along tardy and encumbered,

Eſt brevitate opus, ut currat ſententia, neu ſe
Impediat verbis, laſſas onerantibus aures*.

It is a general maxim, that any words, which do not add ſome importance to the meaning of a ſentence, always ſpoil it. They cannot be ſuperfluous, without being hurtful. "Obſtat," ſays Quinctilian, "quicquid non adjuvat." All that can be eaſily ſupplied in the mind, is better left out in the expreſſion. Thus: "Content "with deſerving a triumph, he refuſed the ho- "nor of it," is better language than to ſay, "Being content with deſerving a triumph, he "refuſed the honor of it." I conſider it, therefore, as one of the moſt uſeful exerciſes of correction, upon reviewing what we have written or compoſed, to contract that round-about method of expreſſion, and to lop off thoſe uſeleſs excreſcences which are commonly found in a firſt draught. Here a ſevere eye ſhould be employed; and we ſhall always find our ſentences acquire more vigor and energy when thus retrenched; provided always, that we run not into the

* "Conciſe your diction, let your ſenſe be clear,
"Nor, with a weight of words, fatigue the ear.
FRANCIS.

extreme of pruning ſo very cloſe, as to give a hardneſs and dryneſs to ſtyle. For here, as in all other things, there is a due medium. Some regard, though not the principal, muſt be had to fulneſs and ſwelling of ſound. Some leaves muſt be left to ſhelter and ſurround the fruit.

6 As ſentences ſhould be cleared of redundant words, ſo alſo of redundant members. As every word ought to preſent a new idea, ſo every member ought to contain a new thought. Oppoſed to this, ſtands the fault we ſometimes meet with, of the laſt member of a period, being no other than the echo of the former, or the repetition of it in ſomewhat a different form. For example; ſpeaking of beauty, "the very firſt diſcovery "of it," ſays Mr. Addiſon, "ſtrikes the mind "with inward joy, and ſpreads delight through "all its faculties." (No. 412) And elſewhere, "it is impoſſible for us to behold the divine "works with coldneſs or indifference, or to ſurvey "ſo many beauties, without a ſecret ſatisfaction "and complacency." (No. 413) In both theſe inſtances, little or nothing is added by the ſecond member of the ſentence to what was already expreſſed in the firſt. And though the free and flowing manner of ſuch an author as Mr. Addiſon, and the graceful harmony of his periods, may palliate ſuch negligences; yet, in general, it holds, that ſtyle, freed from this prolixity, appears both more ſtrong, and more beautiful. The attention becomes remiſs, the mind falls into inaction, when words are

multiplied without a correſponding multiplication of ideas.

After removing ſuperfluities, the ſecond direction I give, for promoting the ſtrength of a ſentence, is, to attend particularly to the uſe of copulatives, relatives, and all the particles employed for tranſition and connexion. Theſe little words, *but*, *and*, *which*, *whoſe*, *where*, *&c.* are frequently the moſt important words of any; they are the joints or hinges upon which all ſentences turn, and, of courſe, much, both of their gracefulneſs and ſtrength, muſt depend upon ſuch particles. The varieties in uſing them are, indeed, ſo infinite, that no particular ſyſtem of rules, reſpecting them, can be given. Attention to the practice of the moſt accurate writers, joined with frequent trials of the different effects, produced by a different uſage of thoſe particles, muſt here direct us *. Some obſervations, I ſhall mention, which have occurred to me as uſeful, without pretending to exhauſt the ſubject.

What is called ſplitting of particles, or ſeparating a prepoſition from the noun which it governs, is always to be avoided. As if I ſhould ſay, "Though virtue borrows no aſſiſtance from, yet "it may often be accompanied by, the advan- "tages of fortune." In ſuch inſtances, we feel a

* On this head, Dr. Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar deſerves to be conſulted; where ſeveral niceties of the language are well pointed out.

pain, from the revulſion, or violent ſepara-
o things, which by their nature ſhould
ited. We are put to a ſtand in
, obliged to reſt for a little on the
y itſelf, which, at the ſame time,
gnificancy, till it is joined to its proper
e noun.

ıe writers needleſsly multiply demonſtra-
ıd relative particles, by the frequent uſe of
ı phraſeology as this: "There is nothing which diſguſts us ſooner than the empty pomp "of language." In introducing a ſubject, or laying down a propoſition, to which we demand particular attention, this ſort of ſtyle is very proper; but, in the ordinary current of diſcourſe, it is better to expreſs ourſelves more ſimply and ſhortly: "Nothing diſguſts us ſooner than the "empty pomp of language."

Other writers make a practice of omitting the relative, in a phraſe of a different kind from the former, where they think the meaning can be underſtood without it. As, "The man I "love." — "The dominions we poſſeſſed, and "the conqueſts we made." But though this elliptical ſtyle be intelligible, and is allowable in converſation and epiſtolary writing, yet, in all writings of a ſerious or dignified kind, it is ungraceful. There, the relative ſhould always be inſerted in its proper place, and the conſtruction filled up: "The man whom I love." — "The domi-"nions which we poſſeſſed, and the conqueſts "which we made."

With regard to the copulative particle, *and*, which occurs ſo frequently in all kinds of compoſition, ſeveral obſervations are to be made. Firſt, It is evident, that the unneceſſary repetition of it enfeebles ſtyle. It has the ſame ſort of effect as the frequent uſe of the vulgar phraſe, *and ſo*, when one is telling a ſtory in common converſation. We ſhall take a ſentence from Sir William Temple, for an inſtance. He is ſpeaking of the refinement of the French language: "The academy ſet up by Cardinal Richelieu, to "amuſe the wits of that age and country, and "divert them from raking into his politics and "miniſtry, brought this into vogue; and the "French wits have, for this laſt age, been wholly "turned to the refinement of their ſtyle and "language; and, indeed, with ſuch ſucceſs, "that it can hardly be equalled, and runs "equally through their verſe and their proſe." Here are no fewer than eight *ands* in one ſentence. This agreeable writer too often makes his ſentences drag in this manner, by a careleſs multiplication of copulatives. It is ſtrange how a writer, ſo accurate as Dean Swift, ſhould have ſtumbled on ſo improper an application of this particle, as he has made in the following ſentence; Eſſay on the Fates of Clergymen. "There "is no talent ſo uſeful towards riſing in the "world, or which puts men more out of the "reach of fortune, than that quality generally "poſſeſt by the dulleſt ſort of people, and is, "in common language, called diſcretion; a "ſpecies of lower prudence, by the aſſiſtance of

" which, &c." By the inſertion of, *and is*, in place of, *which is*, he has not only clogged the ſentence but even made it ungrammatical.

But, in the next place, it is worthy of obſervation, that though the natural uſe of the conjunction, *and*, be to join objects together, and thereby, as one would think, to make their connexion more cloſe; yet, in fact, by dropping the conjunction, we often mark a cloſer connexion, a quicker ſucceſſion of objects, than when it is inſerted between them. Longinus makes this remark; which from many inſtances, appears to be juſt: " Veni, vidi, vici *;" expreſſes with more ſpirit, the rapidity and quick ſucceſſion of conqueſt, than if connecting particles had been uſed. So, in the following deſcription of a rout in Cæſar's Commentaries: " Noſtri, emiſſis pilis, gladiis rem " gerunt; repente poſt tergum equitatus cernitur; " cohortes aliæ appropinquant. Hoſtes terga ver- " tunt; fugientibus equites occurrunt; fit magna " cædes." Bell. Gall. l. 7. †.

Hence, it follows, that when, on the other hand, we ſeek to prevent a quick tranſition from one object to another, when we are making ſome enumeration, in which we wiſh that the objects ſhould appear as diſtinct from each other

* " I came, I ſaw, I conquered."

† " Our men, after having diſcharged their javelins, attack with ſword in hand: of a ſudden, the cavalry make their appearance behind; other bodies of men are ſeen drawing near: the enemies turn their backs; the horſe meet them in their flight; a great ſlaughter enſues."

as poſſible, and that the mind ſhould reſt, for a moment, on each object by itſelf; in this caſe, copulatives may be multiplied with peculiar advantage and grace. As when Lord Bolingbroke ſays, "Such a man might fall a victim to power; "but truth, and reaſon, and liberty, would fall "with him." In the ſame manner, Cæſar deſcribes an engagement with the Nervii: "His "equitibus facile pulſis ac perturbatis, incredibili "celeritate ad flumen decurrerunt; ut pene uno "tempore, & ad ſilvas, & in flumine, & jam in "manibus noſtris, hoſtes viderentur." Bell. Gall. l. 2 *. Here, although he is deſcribing a quick ſucceſſion of events, yet, as it is his intention to ſhow in how many places the enemy ſeemed to be at one time, the copulative is very happily redoubled, in order to paint more ſtrongly the diſtinction of theſe ſeveral places.

This attention to the ſeveral caſes, when it is proper to omit, and when to redouble the copulative, is of conſiderable importance to all who ſtudy eloquence. For, it is a remarkable particularity in language, that the omiſſion of a connecting particle ſhould ſometimes ſerve to make objects appear more cloſely connected; and that the repetition of it ſhould diſtinguiſh and ſeparate them, in ſome meaſure, from each other. Hence

* "The enemy, having eaſily beat off, and ſcattered this "body of horſe, ran down with incredible celerity to the river; "ſo that, almoſt at one moment of time, they appeared to "be in the woods, and in the river, and in the midſt of our "troops."

the omiſſion of it is uſed to denote rapidity; and the repetition of it is deſigned to retard and to aggravate. The reaſon ſeems to be, that, in the former caſe, the mind is ſuppoſed to be hurried ſo faſt through a quick ſucceſſion of objects, that it has not leiſure to point out their connexion; it drops the copulatives in its hurry; and crowds the whole ſeries together, as if it were but one object. Whereas, when we enumerate, with a view to aggravate, the mind is ſuppoſed to proceed with a more ſlow and ſolemn pace; it marks fully the relation of each object to that which ſucceeds it; and, by joining them together with ſeveral copulatives, makes you attend, that the objects, though connected, are yet, in themſelves, diſtinct; that they are many, not one. Obſerve, for inſtance, in the following enumeration, made by the apoſtle Paul, what additional weight and diſtinctneſs is given to each particular, by the repetition of a conjunction. "I am perſuaded, that neither death, "nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor "powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, "ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of "God." Rom. viii. 38, 39. So much with regard to the uſe of copulatives.

I proceed to a third rule, for promoting the ſtrength of a ſentence, which is to diſpoſe of the capital word, or words, in that place of the ſentence, where they will make the fulleſt impreſſion. That ſuch capital words there are in

others; Lord Shaftſbury, for inſtance, much more than Mr. Addiſon; and to this ſort of arrangement is owing, in a great meaſure, that appearance of ſtrength, dignity, and varied harmony, which Lord Shaftſbury's ſtyle poſſeſſes. This will appear from the following ſentences of his Inquiry into Virtue; where all the words are placed, not ſtrictly in the natural order, but with that artificial conſtruction, which may give the period moſt emphaſis and grace. He is ſpeaking of the miſery of vice: "This, as to the "complete immoral ſtate, is, what of their own "accord, men readily remark. Where there "is this abſolute degeneracy, this total apoſtacy "from all candor, truſt, or equity, there are "few who do not ſee and acknowledge the mi-"ſery which is conſequent. Seldom is the caſe "miſconſtrued, when at worſt. The misfortune "is, that we look not on this depravity, nor "conſider how it ſtands, in leſs degrees. As if, "to be abſolutely immoral, were, indeed, the "greateſt miſery; but, to be ſo in a little degree, "ſhould be no miſery or harm at all. Which, "to allow, is juſt as reaſonable as to own, that "'tis the greateſt ill of a body to be in the "utmoſt manner maimed or diſtorted; but that, "to loſe the uſe only of one limb, or to be "impaired in ſome ſingle organ or member, is "no ill worthy the leaſt notice." (Vol. ii. p. 66.) Here is no violence done to the language, though there are many inverſions. All is ſtately, and

arranged with art; which is the great characteriſtic of this author's ſtyle.

We need only open any page of Mr. Addiſon, to ſee quite a different order in the conſtruction of ſentences. "Our ſight is the moſt perfect, and "moſt delightful of all our ſenſes. It fills the "mind with the largeſt variety of ideas, converſes "with its objects at the greateſt diſtance, and "continues the longeſt in action, without being "tired, or ſatiated with its proper enjoyments. "The ſenſe of feeling can, indeed, give us a "notion of extenſion, ſhape, and all other ideas "that enter at the eye, except colors; but, at "the ſame time, it is very much ſtraitened and "confined in its operations," &c. (Spectator, N°. 411.) In this ſtrain, he always proceeds, following the moſt natural and obvious order of the language: and if, by this means, he has leſs pomp and majeſty than Shaftſbury, he has, in return, more nature, more eaſe and ſimplicity; which are beauties of a higher order.

But whether we practiſe inverſion or not, and in whatever part of the ſentence we diſpoſe of the capital words, it is always a point of great moment, that theſe capital words ſhall ſtand clear and diſentangled from any other words that would clog them. Thus, when there are any circumſtances of time, place, or other limitations, which the principal object of our ſentence requires to have connected with it, we muſt take eſpecial care to diſpoſe of them, ſo as not to cloud that principal object, nor to bury it under

a load of circumſtances. This will be made clearer by an example. Obſerve the arrangement of the following ſentence, in Lord Shaftſbury's advice to an author. He is ſpeaking of modern poets, as compared with the ancient: "If, whilſt they "profeſs only to pleaſe, they ſecretly adviſe, "and give inſtruction, they may now, perhaps, "as well as formerly, be eſteemed, with juſtice, "the beſt and moſt honorable among authors." This is a well-conſtructed ſentence. It contains a great many circumſtances and adverbs, neceſſary to qualify the meaning; *only*, *ſecretly*, *as well*, *perhaps*, *now*, *with juſtice*, *formerly*; yet theſe are placed with ſo much art, as neither to embarraſs, nor weaken the ſentence; while that which is the capital object in it, viz. "poets "being juſtly eſteemed the beſt and moſt honor-"able among authors," comes out in the concluſion clear and detached, and poſſeſſes its proper place. See now, what would have been the effect of a different arrangement. Suppoſe him to have placed the members of the ſentence thus: "If, "whilſt they profeſs to pleaſe only, they adviſe "and give inſtruction ſecretly, they may be "eſteemed the beſt and moſt honorable among "authors, with juſtice, perhaps, now, as well "as formerly." Here we have preciſely the ſame words, and the ſame ſenſe; but, by means of the circumſtances being ſo intermingled as to clog the capital words, the whole becomes perplexed, without grace, and without ſtrength.

A fourth rule, for conſtructing ſentences with proper ſtrength, is, to make the members of them go on riſing and growing in their importance above one another. This ſort of arrangement is called a climax, and is always conſidered as a beauty in compoſition. From what cauſe it pleaſes, is abundantly evident. In all things, we naturally love to aſcend to what is more and more beautiful, rather than to follow the retrograde order. Having had once ſome conſiderable object ſet before us, it is, with pain, we are pulled back to attend to an inferior circumſtance. "Cavendum "eſt," ſays Quinctilian, whoſe authority I always willingly quote, "ne decreſcat oratio, & fortiori "ſubjungatur aliquid infirmius; ſicut, ſacrilego, "fur; aut latroni, petulans. Augeri enim debent "ſententiæ & inſurgere*." Of this beauty, in the conſtruction of ſentences, the orations of Cicero furniſh many examples. His pompous manner naturally led him to ſtudy it; and, generally, in order to render the climax perfect, he makes both the ſenſe and the ſound riſe together, with a very magnificent ſwell. So in his oration for Milo, ſpeaking of a deſign of Clodius's for aſſaſſinating Pompey: "Atqui ſi res, ſi vir, ſi tempus ullum

* "Care muſt be taken, that our compoſition ſhall not "fall off, and that a weaker expreſſion ſhall not follow one "of more ſtrength; as if, after ſacrilege, we ſhould bring "in theft; or, having mentioned a robbery, we ſhould "ſubjoin petulance. Sentences ought always to riſe and "grow."

"dignum fuit, certe hæc in illa cauſa ſumma "omnia fuerunt. Inſidiator erat in foro collo- "catus, atque in veſtibulo ipſo ſenatus; ei viro "autem mors parabatur, cujus in vita nitebatur "ſalus civitatis; eo porro reipublicæ tempore, "quo ſi unus ille occidiſſet, non hæc ſolum ci- "vitas, ſed gentes omnes concidiſſent." The following inſtance, from Lord Bolingbroke, is alſo beautiful: "This decency, this grace, this "propriety of manners to character, is ſo eſſential "to princes in particular, that, whenever it is "neglected, their virtues loſe a great degree of "luſtre, and their defects acquire much aggrava- "tion. Nay more; by neglecting this decency "and this grace, and for want of a ſufficient regard "to appearances, even their virtues may betray "them into failings, their failings into vices, and "their vices into habits unworthy of princes, and "unworthy of men." (Idea of a Patriot King.)

I muſt obſerve, however, that this ſort of full and oratorial climax, can neither be always obtained, nor ought to be always ſought after. Only ſome kinds of writing admit ſuch ſentences; and, to ſtudy them too frequently, eſpecially, if the ſubject require not ſo much pomp, is affected and diſagreeable. But there is ſomething approaching to a climax, which it is a general, rule to ſtudy, "ne decreſcat oratio," as Quinctilian ſpeaks, "& ne fortiori ſubjungatur "aliquid infirmius." A weaker aſſertion or propoſition ſhould never come after a ſtronger one;

and

and when our ſentence conſiſts of two members, the longeſt ſhould, generally, be the concluding one. There is a twofold reaſon for this laſt direction. Periods, thus divided, are pronounced more eaſily; and the ſhorteſt member being placed firſt, we carry it more readily in our memory as we proceed to the ſecond, and ſee the connexion of the two more clearly. Thus, to ſay, "when our paſſions have forſaken us, "we flatter ourſelves with the belief that we "have forſaken them," is both more graceful and more clear, than to begin with the longeſt part of the propoſition: "We flatter ourſelves "with the belief that we have forſaken our paſ- "ſions, when they have forſaken us." In general, it is always agreeable to find a ſentence riſing upon us, and growing in its importance to the very laſt word, when this conſtruction can be managed without affectation, or unſeaſonable pomp. "If we riſe yet higher," ſays Mr. Addiſon very beautifully, "and conſider the fixed "ſtars as ſo many oceans of flame, that are each "of them attended with a different ſet of planets; "and ſtill diſcover new firmaments and new "lights, that are ſunk farther in thoſe unfathom- "able depths of ether; we are loſt in ſuch a "labyrinth of ſuns and worlds, and confounded "with the magnificence and immenſity of nature" (Spect. No. 410). Hence follows clearly,

A fifth rule for the ſtrength of ſentences; which is, to avoid concluding them with an adverb, a prepoſition, or any inconſiderable

word. Such concluſions are always enfeebling and degrading. There are ſentences, indeed, where the ſtreſs and ſignificancy reſt chiefly upon ſome words of this kind. In this caſe, they are not to be conſidered as circumſtances, but as the capital figures; and ought, in propriety, to have the principal place allotted them. No fault, for inſtance, can be found with this ſentence of Bolingbroke's: "In their proſperity, my friends "ſhall never hear of me; in their adverſity, always." Where *never*, and *always*, being emphatical words, were to be ſo placed, as to make a ſtrong impreſſion. But I ſpeak now of thoſe inferior parts of ſpeech, when introduced as circumſtances, or as qualifications of more important words. In ſuch caſe, they ſhould always be diſpoſed of in the leaſt conſpicuous parts of the period; and ſo claſſed with other words of greater dignity, as to be kept in their proper ſecondary ſtation.

Agreeably to this rule, we ſhould always avoid concluding with any of thoſe particles, which mark the caſes of nouns, — *of*, *to*, *from*, *with*, *by*. For inſtance, it is a great deal better to ſay, "avarice is a crime of which wiſe men "are often guilty," than to ſay, "avarice is a "crime which wiſe men are often guilty of." This is a phraſeology which all correct writers ſhun; and with reaſon. For, beſides the want of dignity which ariſes from thoſe monoſyllables at the end, the imagination cannot avoid reſting, for a little, on the import of the word which cloſes the ſentence. And, as thoſe prepoſitions

have no import of their own, but only ſerve to point out the relations of other words, it is diſagreeable for the mind to be left pauſing on a word, which does not, by itſelf, produce any idea, nor form any picture in the fancy.

For the ſame reaſon, verbs which are uſed in a compound ſenſe, with ſome of theſe prepoſitions, are, though not ſo bad, yet ſtill not ſo beautiful concluſions of a period; ſuch as, *bring about*, *lay hold of*, *come over to*, *clear up*, and many others of this kind: inſtead of which, if we can employ a ſimple verb, it always terminates the ſentence with more ſtrength. Even the pronoun, *it*, though it has the import of a ſubſtantive noun, and indeed often forces itſelf upon us unavoidably, yet, when we want to give dignity to a ſentence, ſhould, if poſſible, be avoided in the concluſion; more eſpecially, when it is joined with ſome of the prepoſitions, as, *with it*, *in it*, *to it*. In the following ſentence of the Spectator, which otherwiſe is abundantly noble, the bad effect of this cloſe is ſenſible: "There is not, in my opinion, a more pleaſing "and triumphant conſideration in religion, than "this, of the perpetual progreſs which the ſoul "makes towards the perfection of its nature, "without ever arriving at a period in it." (No. 111). How much more graceful were the ſentence, if it had been ſo conſtructed as to cloſe with the word, *period!*

Beſides particles and pronouns, any phraſe which expreſſes a circumſtance only, always

brings up the rear of a ſentence with a bad grace. We may judge of this, by the following ſentence from Lord Bolingbroke (Letter on the State of Parties at the Acceſſion of King George I.): "Let me therefore conclude by repeating, "that diviſion has cauſed all the miſchief we "lament; that union alone can retrieve it; and "that a great advance towards this union, was "the coalition of parties, ſo happily begun, ſo "ſucceſsfully carried on, and of late ſo unac-"countably neglected; to ſay no worſe." This laſt phraſe, *to ſay no worſe*, occaſions a ſad falling off at the end; ſo much the more unhappy, as the reſt of the period is conducted after the manner of a climax, which we expect to find growing to the laſt.

The proper diſpoſition of ſuch circumſtances in a ſentence, is often attended with conſiderable trouble, in order to adjuſt them ſo, as ſhall conſiſt equally with the perſpicuity and the grace of the period. Though neceſſary parts, they are, however, like unſhapely ſtones in a building, which try the ſkill of an artiſt, where to place them with the leaſt offence. "Jungantur," ſays Quinctilian, "quo congruunt maxime; ſicut "in ſtructura ſaxorum rudium, etiam ipſa enor-"mitas invenit cui applicari, & in quo poſſit "inſiſtere *."

* "Let them be inſerted wherever the happieſt place for "them can be found; as, in a ſtructure compoſed of rough "ſtones, there are always places where the moſt irregular

Addison— Swift
Bolingbroke

The cloſe is always an unſuitable place for them. When the ſenſe admits it, the ſooner they are diſpatched, generally ſpeaking, the better; that the more important and ſignificant words may poſſeſs the laſt place, quite diſencumbered. It is a rule, too, never to crowd too many circumſtances together, but rather to interſperſe them in different parts of the ſentence, joined with the capital words on which they depend; provided that care be taken, as I before directed, not to clog thoſe capital words with them. For inſtance, when Dean Swift ſays, "what I had "the honor of mentioning to your Lordſhip, "ſometime ago, in converſation, was not a new "thought." (Letter to the Earl of Oxford.) Theſe two circumſtances, *ſometime ago*, and *in converſation*, which are here put together, would have had a better effect disjoined, thus: "What "I had the honor, ſometime ago, of mentioning "to your Lordſhip in converſation." And in the following ſentence of Lord Bolingbroke's (Remarks on the Hiſtory of England:) "A mo-"narchy, limited like ours, may be placed, for "aught I know, as it has been often repreſented, "juſt in the middle point, from whence a devia-"tion leads, on the one hand, to tyranny: and on "the other, to anarchy." The arrangement would have been happier thus: "A monarchy, limited "like ours, may, for aught I know, be placed,

"and unſhapely may find ſome adjacent one to which it can "be joined, and ſome baſis on which it may reſt."

" as it has often been repreſented, juſt in the " middle point, &c.

I ſhall give only one rule more, relating to the ſtrength of a ſentence, which is, that in the members of a ſentence, where two things are compared or contraſted to one another; where either a reſemblance or an oppoſition is intended to be expreſſed; ſome reſemblance, in the language and conſtruction, ſhould be preſerved. For when the things themſelves correſpond to each other, we naturally expect to find the words correſponding too. We are diſappointed when it is otherwiſe; and the compariſon, or contraſt, appears more imperfect. Thus, when Lord Bolingbroke ſays, " the laughers will be " for thoſe who have moſt wit; the ſerious part " of mankind, for thoſe who have moſt reaſon " on their ſide;" (Differt. on Parties, pref.) the oppoſition would have been more complete, if he had ſaid, " the laughers will be for thoſe " who have moſt wit; the ſerious, for thoſe " who have moſt reaſon on their ſide." The following paſſage from Mr. Pope's preface to his Homer, fully exemplifies the rule I am now giving: " Homer was the greater genius; Virgil, " the better artiſt: in the one, we moſt admire " the man; in the other, the work. Homer " hurries us with a commanding impetuoſity: " Virgil leads us with an attractive majeſty. " Homer ſcatters with a generous profuſion; " Virgil beſtows with a careful magnificence. " Homer, like the Nile, pours out his riches

" with a ſudden overflow; Virgil, like a river " in its banks, with a conſtant ſtream. — And " when we look upon their machines, Homer " ſeems like his own Jupiter in his terrors, ſhak- " ing Olympus, ſcattering the lightnings, and " firing the heavens; Virgil, like the ſame " power, in his benevolence, counſelling with " the gods, laying plans for empires, and order- " ing his whole creation." — Periods thus conſtructed, when introduced with propriety, and not returning too often, have a ſenſible beauty. But we muſt beware of carrying our attention to this beauty too far. It ought only to be occaſionally ſtudied, when compariſon or oppoſition of objects naturally leads to it. If ſuch a conſtruction as this be aimed at in all our ſentences, it betrays into a diſagreeable uniformity; produces a regularly returning clink in the period, which tires the ear; and plainly diſcovers affectation. Among the ancients, the ſtyle of Iſocrates is faulty in this reſpect; and, on that account, by ſome of their beſt critics, particularly by Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, he is ſeverely cenſured.

This finiſhes what I had to ſay concerning ſentences, conſidered, with reſpect to their meaning, under the three heads of perſpicuity, unity, and ſtrength. It is a ſubject on which I have inſiſted fully, for two reaſons: Firſt becauſe it is a ſubject, which, by its nature, can be rendered more didactic, and ſubjected more to preciſe rule, than many other ſubjects of criticiſm; and next,

becauſe it appears to me of conſiderable importance and uſe.

For, though many of thoſe attentions, which I have been recommending, may appear minute, yet their effect, upon writing and ſtyle, is much greater than might, at firſt, be imagined. A ſentiment which is expreſſed in a period, clearly, neatly, and happily arranged, makes always a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind, than one that is any how feeble or embarraſſed. Every one feels this upon a compariſon: and if the effect be ſenſible in one ſentence, how much more in a whole diſcourſe, or compoſition, that is made up of ſuch ſentences?

The fundamental rule of the conſtruction of ſentences, and into which all others might be reſolved, undoubtedly is, to communicate, in the cleareſt and moſt natural order, the ideas which we mean to transfuſe into the minds of others. Every arrangement that does moſt juſtice to the ſenſe, and expreſſes it to moſt advantage, ſtrikes us as beautiful. To this point have tended all the rules I have given. And, indeed, did men always think clearly, and were they, at the ſame time, fully maſters of the language in which they write, there would be occaſion for few rules. Their ſentences would then, of courſe acquire all thoſe properties of preciſion, unity, and ſtrength which I have recommended. For we may reſt aſſured, that, whenever we expreſs ourſelves ill, there is, beſides the miſmanagement of language, for the moſt part, ſome miſtake in

our manner of conceiving the ſubject. Embarraſſed, obſcure, and feeble ſentences, are generally, if not always, the reſult of embarraſſed, obſcure, and feeble thought. Thought and language act and re-act upon each other mutually. Logic and rhetoric have here, as in many other caſes, a ſtrict connexion; and he that is learning to arrange his ſentences with accuracy and order, is learning, at the ſame time, to think with accuracy and order; an obſervation which alone will juſtify all the care and attention we have beſtowed on this ſubject.

LECTURE XIII.

Structure of Sentences. — Harmony.

HITHERTO we have conſidered ſentences, with reſpect to their meaning, under the heads of perſpicuity, unity, and ſtrength. We are now to conſider them, with reſpect to their ſound, their harmony, or agreeableneſs to the ear; which was the laſt quality belonging to them that I propoſed to treat of.

Sound is a quality much inferior to ſenſe; yet ſuch as muſt not be diſregarded. For, as long as ſounds are the vehicle of conveyance for our ideas, there will be always a very conſiderable connexion between the idea which is conveyed, and the nature of the ſound which conveys it. Pleaſing ideas can hardly be tranſmitted to the mind, by means of harſh and diſagreeable ſounds. The imagination revolts as ſoon as it hears them uttered. "Nihil," ſays Quinctilian, "poteſt intrare in affectum quod in aure, velut "quodam veſtibulo, ſtatim offendit *." Muſic has naturally a great power over all men to prompt

* "Nothing can enter into the affections which ſtumbles "at the threſhold, by offending the ear."

and facilitate certain emotions: inſomuch, that there are hardly any diſpoſitions which we wiſh to raiſe in others, but certain ſounds may be found concordant to thoſe diſpoſitions, and tending to promote them. Now, language can, in ſome degree, be rendered capable of this power of muſic; a circumſtance which muſt needs heighten our idea of language as a wonderful invention. Not content with ſimply interpreting our ideas to others, it can give them thoſe ideas enforced by correſponding ſounds; and to the pleaſure of communicated thought, can add the new and ſeparate pleaſure of melody.

In the harmony of periods, two things may be conſidered. Firſt, agreeable ſound, or modulation in general, without any particular expreſſion: Next, the ſound ſo ordered, as to become expreſſive of the ſenſe. The firſt is the more common; the ſecond, the higher beauty.

Firſt, Let us conſider agreeable ſound, in general, as the property of a well-conſtructed ſentence: and, as it was of proſe-ſentences we have hitherto treated, we ſhall confine ourſelves to them under this head. This beauty of muſical conſtruction in proſe, it is plain, will depend upon two things; the choice of words, and the arrangement of them.

I begin with the choice of words; on which head, there is not much to be ſaid, unleſs I were to deſcend into a tedious and frivolous detail concerning the powers of the ſeveral letters, or ſimple ſounds, of which ſpeech is

compoſed. It is evident, that words are moſt agreeable to the ear which are compoſed of ſmooth and liquid ſounds, where there is a proper intermixture of vowels and conſonants; without too many harſh conſonants rubbing againſt each other; or too many open vowels in ſucceſſion, to cauſe a hiatus, or diſagreeable aperture of the mouth. It may always be aſſumed as a principle, that, whatever ſounds are difficult in pronunciation, are, in the ſame proportion, harſh and painful to the ear. Vowels give ſoftneſs; conſonants, ſtrength to the ſound of words. The muſic of language requires a juſt proportion of both; and will be hurt, will be rendered either grating or effeminate, by an exceſs of either. Long words are commonly more agreeable to the ear than monoſyllables. They pleaſe it by the compoſition, or ſucceſſion of ſounds which they preſent to it; and, accordingly, the moſt muſical languages abound moſt in them. Among words of any length, thoſe are the moſt muſical, which do not run wholly either upon long or ſhort ſyllables, but are compoſed of an intermixture of them; ſuch as, *repent*, *produce*, *velocity*, *celerity*, *independent*, *impetuoſity*.

The next head, reſpecting the harmony which reſults from a proper arrangement of the words and members of a period, is more complex, and of greater nicety. For, let the words themſelves be ever ſo well choſen, and well ſounding, yet, if they be ill diſpoſed, the muſic of the ſentence is utterly loſt. In the harmonious

ſtructure and diſpoſition of periods, no writer whatever, ancient or modern, equals Cicero. He had ſtudied this with care; and was fond, perhaps to exceſs, of what he calls, the plena ac "numeroſa oratio." We need only open his writings, to find inſtances that will render the effect of muſical language ſenſible to every ear. What, for example, can be more full, round, and ſwelling, than the following ſentence of the 4th oration againſt Catiline? "Cogitate quantis "laboribus fundatum imperium, quanta virtute "ſtabilitam libertatem, quanta Deorum benigni-"tate auctas exaggerataſque fortunas, una nox "pene delerit." In Engliſh, we may take, for an inſtance of a muſical ſentence, the following from Milton, in his Treatiſe on Education: "We ſhall conduct you to a hill-ſide, laborious, "indeed, at the firſt aſcent; but elſe, ſo ſmooth, "ſo green, ſo full of goodly proſpects, and me-"lodious ſounds on every ſide, that the harp of "Orpheus was not more charming." Every thing in this ſentence conſpires to promote the harmony. The words are happily choſen; full of liquids and ſoft ſounds; *laborious*, *ſmooth*, *green*, *goodly*, *melodious*, *charming:* and theſe words ſo artfully arranged, that, were we to alter the collocation of any one of them, we ſhould, preſently, be ſenſible of the melody ſuffering. For, let us obſerve, how finely the members of the period ſwell one above another. "So ſmooth, ſo green —"ſo full of goodly proſpects,—and melodious

"ſounds on every ſide;" — till the ear, prepared by this gradual riſe, is conducted to that full cloſe on which it reſts with pleaſure; — "that the "harp of Orpheus was not more charming."

The ſtructure of periods, then, being ſuſceptible of a melody very ſenſible to the ear, our next inquiry ſhould be, How is this melodious ſtructure formed, what are the principles of it, and by what laws is it regulated? And, upon this ſubject, were I to follow the ancient rhetoricians, it would be eaſy to give a great variety of rules. For here they have entered into a minute and particular detail; more particular, indeed, than on any other head that regards language. They hold, that to proſe as well as to verſe, there belong certain numbers, leſs ſtrict, indeed, yet ſuch as can be aſcertained by rule. They go ſo far as to ſpecify the feet, as they are called, that is, the ſucceſſion of long and ſhort ſyllables, which ſhould enter into the different members of a ſentence, and to ſhow what the effect of each of theſe will be. Wherever they treat of the ſtructure of ſentences, it is always the muſic of them that makes the principal object. Cicero and Quinctilian are full of this. The other qualities of preciſion, unity, and ſtrength, which we conſider as of chief importance, they handle ſlightly; but when they come to the "*junctura & numerus*," the modulation and harmony, there they are copious. Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, one of the moſt judicious critics of antiquity, has written a treatiſe

on the *compoſition of words in a ſentence*, which is altogether confined to their muſical effect. He makes the excellency of a ſentence to conſiſt in four things; firſt, in the ſweetneſs of ſingle ſounds; ſecondly, in the compoſition of ſounds, that is, the numbers or feet; thirdly, in change or variety of ſound; and fourthly, in ſound ſuited to the ſenſe. On all theſe points he writes with great accuracy and refinement; and is very worthy of being conſulted; though, were one now to write a book on the ſtructure of ſentences, we ſhould expect to find the ſubject treated of in a more extenſive manner.

In modern times, this whole ſubject of the muſical ſtructure of diſcourſe, it is plain, has been much leſs ſtudied; and, indeed, for ſeveral reaſons, can be much leſs ſubjected to rule. The reaſons, it will be neceſſary to give, both to juſtify my not following the tract of the ancient rhetoricians on this ſubject, and to ſhow how it has come to paſs, that a part of compoſition, which once made ſo conſpicuous a figure, now draws much leſs attention.

In the firſt place, the ancient languages, I mean the Greek and the Roman, were much more ſuſceptible than ours, of the graces and the powers of melody. The quantities of their ſyllables were more fixed and determined; their words were longer, and more ſonorous; their method of varying the terminations of nouns and verbs, both introduced a greater variety of liquid ſounds, and freed them from that multiplicity of little

auxiliary words which we are obliged to employ; and, what is of the greateſt conſequence, the inverſions which their languages allowed, gave them the power of placing their words in whatever order was moſt ſuited to a muſical arrangement. All theſe were great advantages which they enjoyed above us, for harmony of period.

In the next place, the Greeks and Romans, the former eſpecially, were in truth, much more muſical nations than we; their genius was more turned to delight in the melody of ſpeech. Muſic is known to have been a more extenſive art among them than it is with us; more univerſally ſtudied, and applied to a greater variety of objects. Several learned men, particularly, the Abbé du Bos, in his Reflections on Poetry and Painting, have clearly proved, that the theatrical compoſitions of the ancients, both their tragedies and comedies, were ſet to a kind of muſic. Whence, the *modos fecit*, and the *tibiis dextris & ſiniſtris*, prefixed to the editions of Terence's plays. All ſort of declamation and public ſpeaking, was carried on by them in a much more muſical tone than it is among us. It approached to a kind of chanting or recitative. Among the Athenians, there was what was called the nomic melody; or a particular meaſure preſcribed to the public officers, in which they were to promulgate the laws to the people; leſt by reading them with improper tones, the laws might be expoſed to contempt. Among the Romans, there is a noted ſtory of C. Gracchus, when he was declaiming

in

in public, having a muſician ſtanding at his back, in order to give him the proper tones with a pipe or flute. Even when pronouncing thoſe terrible tribunitial harangues, by which he inflamed the one half of the citizens of Rome againſt the other, this attention to the muſic of ſpeech was, in thoſe times, it ſeems, thought neceſſary to ſucceſs. Quinctilian, though he condemns the exceſs of this ſort of pronunciation, yet allows a "cantus "obſcurior" to be a beauty in a public ſpeaker. Hence, that variety of accents, acute, grave, and circumflex, which we find marked upon the Greek ſyllables, to expreſs, not the quantity of them, but the tone in which they were to be ſpoken: the application of which is now wholly unknown to us. And though the Romans did not mark thoſe accents in their writing, yet it appears from Quinctilian, that they uſed them in pronunciation: *Quantum, quale*," ſays he, "comparan-"tes gravi, interrogantes acuto tenore concludunt." As muſic then, was an object much more attended to in ſpeech, among the Greeks and Romans, than it is with us; as, in all kinds of public ſpeaking, they employed a much greater variety of notes, of tones, or inflections of voice, than we uſe; this is one clear reaſon of their paying a greater attention to that conſtruction of ſentences, which might beſt ſuit this muſical pronunciation.

It is farther known, that, in conſequence of the genius of their languages, and of their manner of pronouncing them, the muſical arrangement of ſentences, did, in fact, produce a greater

effect in public ſpeaking among them than it could poſſibly do in any modern oration; another reaſon why it deſerved to be more ſtudied. Cicero, in his treatiſe, entitled, *Orator*, tells us, "conciones ſæpe exclamare vidi, cum verba apte "cecidiſſent. Id enim expectant aures *." And he gives a remarkable inſtance of the effect of a harmonious period upon a whole aſſembly, from a ſentence of one of Carbo's Orations, ſpoken in his hearing. The ſentence was, "patris dictum "ſapiens temeritas filii comprobavit." By means of the ſound of which, alone, he tells us, "tan-"tus clamor concionis excitatus eſt, ut prorſus "admirabile eſſet." He makes us remark the feet of which theſe words conſiſt, to which he aſcribes the power of the melody; and ſhows how, by altering the collocation, the whole effect would be loſt; as thus: "patris dictum ſapiens compro-"bavit temeritas filii." Now, though it be true that Carbo's ſentence is extremely muſical, and would be agreeable, at this day, to any audience, yet I cannot believe that an Engliſh ſentence, equally harmonious, would, by its harmony alone, produce any ſuch effect on a Britiſh audience, or excite any ſuch wonderful applauſe and admiration, as Cicero informs us this of Carbo produced. Our northern ears are too coarſe and obtuſe. The melody of ſpeech has leſs power over us, and

* "I have often been witneſs to burſts of exclamation "in the public aſſemblies, when ſentences cloſed muſi-"cally; for that is a pleaſure which the ear expects."

by our ſimpler and plainer method of uttering words, ſpeech is, in truth, accompanied with leſs melody than it was among the Greeks and Romans *.

For theſe reaſons, I am of opinion, that it is in vain to think of beſtowing the ſame attention upon the harmonious ſtructure of our ſentences, that was beſtowed by theſe ancient nations. The doctrine of the Greek and Roman critics, on this head, has miſled ſome to imagine, that it might be equally applied to our tongue; and that our proſe-writing might be regulated by ſpondees and trochees, and iambus's and pœons and other metrical feet. But, firſt, our words cannot be meaſured, or, at leaſt, can be meaſured very imperfectly by any feet of this kind. For, the quantity, the length and ſhortneſs of our ſyllables, is not, by any means, ſo fixed and ſubjected to rule, as in the Greek and Roman tongues; but very often left arbitrary, and determined by the emphaſis, and the ſenſe. Next, though our proſe could admit of ſuch metrical regulation, yet, from our plainer method of pronouncing all ſort of diſcourſe, the effect would not be at all ſo ſenſible to the ear, nor be reliſhed with

* "In verſu quidem, theatra tota exclamant ſi fuit una "ſyllaba aut brevior aut longior. Nec vero multitudo pedes "novit, nec ullos numeros tenet; nec illud quod offendit, aut "cur, aut in quo offendat intelligit; & tamen omnium longitu- "dinum & brevitatum in ſonis, ſicut acutarum, graviumque "vocum, judicium ipſa natura in auribus noſtris collocavit."

CICERO, Orator. c. 51.

ſo much pleaſure, as among the Greeks and Romans: And, laſtly, this whole doctrine about the meaſures and numbers of proſe, even as it is delivered by the ancient rhetoricians themſelves, is, in truth, in a great meaſure looſe and uncertain. It appears, indeed, that the melody of diſcourſe was a matter of infinitely more attention to them, than ever it has been to the moderns. But, though they write a great deal about it, they have never been able to reduce it to any rules which could be of real uſe in practice. If we conſult Cicero's *Orator*, where this point is diſcuſſed with the moſt minuteneſs, we will ſee how much theſe ancient critics differed from one another, about the feet proper for the concluſion, and other parts of a ſentence; and how much, after all, was left to the judgment of the ear. Nor, indeed, is it poſſible to give preciſe rules concerning this matter, in any language; as all proſe-compoſition muſt be allowed to run looſe in its numbers; and, according as the tenor of a diſcourſe varies, the modulation of ſentences muſt vary infinitely.

But, although I apprehend that this muſical arrangement cannot be reduced into a ſyſtem, I am far from thinking, that it is a quality to be neglected in compoſition. On the contrary, I hold its effect to be very conſiderable; and that every one who ſtudies to write with grace, much more, who ſeeks to pronounce in public, with ſucceſs, will be obliged to attend to it not a little. But it is his ear, cultivated by attention and practice, that muſt chiefly direct him. For

any rules that can be given, on this ſubject, are very general. Some rules, however, there are, which may be of uſe to form the ear to the proper harmony of diſcourſe. I proceed to mention ſuch as appear to me moſt material.

There are two things on which the muſic of a ſentence chiefly depends. Theſe are, the proper diſtribution of the ſeveral members of it; and, the cloſe or cadence of the whole.

Firſt, I ſay, the diſtribution, of the ſeveral members is to be carefully attended to. It is of importance to obſerve, that, whatever is eaſy and agreeable to the organs of ſpeech, always ſounds grateful to the ear. While a period is going on, the termination of each of its members forms a pauſe or reſt, in pronouncing: and theſe reſts ſhould be ſo diſtributed, as to make the courſe of the breathing eaſy, and, at the ſame time, ſhould fall at ſuch diſtances, as to bear a certain muſical proportion to each other. This will be beſt illuſtrated by examples. The following ſentence is from Archbiſhop Tillotſon; "this diſcourſe concerning the eaſineſs of God's "commands does, all along, ſuppoſe and acknow- "ledge the difficulties of the firſt entrance upon "a religious courſe; except, only in thoſe perſons "who have had the happineſs to be trained up "to religion by the eaſy and inſenſible degrees "of a pious and virtuous education." Here there is no harmony; nay, there is ſome degree of harſhneſs and unpleaſantneſs; owing principally to this, that there is, properly, no more than one pauſe or reſt in the ſentence, falling betwixt the two members into which it is divided; each

of which is ſo long as to occaſion a conſiderable ſtretch of the breath in pronouncing it.

Obſerve, now, on the other hand, the eaſe with which the following ſentence, from Sir William Temple, glides along, and the graceful intervals at which the pauſes are placed. He is ſpeaking ſarcaſtically of man: "But God be "thanked, his pride is greater than his ignorance, "and what he wants in knowledge, he ſupplies "by ſufficiency. When he has looked about "him, as far as he can, he concludes, there is "no more to be ſeen; when he is at the end of "his line, he is at the bottom of the ocean; when "he has ſhot his beſt, he is ſure none ever "did, or ever can, ſhoot better or beyond it. "His own reaſon he holds to be the certain "meaſure of truth; and his own knowledge, of "what is poſſible in nature". Here every thing

* Or this inſtance. — He is addreſſing himſelf to Lady Eſſex, upon the death of her child: "I was once in hope, "that what was ſo violent could not be long: But, when I "obſerved your grief to grow ſtronger with age, and to "increaſe, like a ſtream, the farther it ran; when I ſaw it "draw out to ſuch unhappy conſequences, and to threaten, no "leſs than your child, your health, and your life, I could no "longer forbear this endeavour, nor end it, without begging of "you, for God's ſake, and for your own, for your children, "and your friends, your country, and your family, that "you would no longer abandon yourſelf to a diſconſolate "paſſion; but that you would, at length, awaken your "piety, give way to your prudence, or, at leaſt, rouſe the "invincible ſpirit of the Percys, that never yet ſhrunk at any "diſaſter."

is, at once, eaſy to the breath, and grateful to the ear; and, it is this ſort of flowing meaſure, this regular and proportional diviſion of the members of his ſentences, which renders Sir William Temple's ſtyle always agreeable. I muſt obſerve, at the ſame time, that a ſentence, with too many reſts, and theſe placed at intervals too apparently meaſured and regular, is apt to ſavour of affectation.

The next thing to be attended to, is, the cloſe or cadence of the whole ſentence, which, as it is always the part moſt ſenſible to the ear, demands the greateſt care. So Quinctilian: "Non "igitur durum ſit, neque abruptum, quo animi "velut reſpirant ac reficiuntur. Hæc eſt ſedes "orationis; hoc auditor expectat; hic laus omnis "declamat *." The only important rule that can be given here, is, that when we aim at dignity or elevation, the ſound ſhould be made to grow to the laſt; the longeſt members of the period, and the fulleſt and moſt ſonorous words, ſhould be reſerved to the concluſion. As an example of this, the following ſentence of Mr. Addiſon's may be given: "It fills the mind (ſpeaking "of ſight) with the largeſt variety of ideas; "converſes with its objects at the greateſt diſtance; "and continues the longeſt in action, without

* "Let there be nothing raſh or abrupt in the concluſion "of the ſentence, on which the mind pauſes and reſts. This "is the moſt material part in the ſtructure of diſcourſe. Here "every hearer expects to be gratified; here his applauſe breaks "forth."

"being tired or ſatiated with its proper enjoy-
"ments." Every reader muſt be ſenſible of a beauty here, both in the proper diviſion of the members and pauſes, and the manner in which the ſentence is rounded, and conducted to a full and harmonious cloſe.

The ſame holds in melody, that I obſerved to take place with reſpect to ſignificancy; that a falling off at the end, always hurts greatly. For this reaſon, particles, pronouns, and little words, are as ungracious to the ear, at the concluſion, as I formerly ſhowed they were inconſiſtent with ſtrength of expreſſion. It is more than probable, that the ſenſe and the ſound have here a mutual influence on each other. That which hurts the ear, ſeems to mar the ſtrength of the meaning; and that which really degrades the ſenſe, in conſequence of this primary effect, appears alſo to have a bad ſound. How diſagreeable is the following ſentence of an author, ſpeaking of the Trinity! "It is a myſtery which we firmly "believe the truth of, and humbly adore the "depth of." And how eaſily could it have been mended by this tranſpoſition! "It is a "myſtery, the truth of which we firmly be-"lieve, and the depth of which we humbly "adore." In general it ſeems to hold, that a muſical cloſe, in our language, requires either the laſt ſyllable, or the penult, that is, the laſt but one, to be a long ſyllable. Words which conſiſt moſtly of ſhort ſyllables, as, *contrary*, *particular*, *retroſpect*, ſeldom conclude a ſentence

harmoniouſly, unleſs a run of long ſyllables, before has rendered them agreeable to the ear.

It is neceſſary, however, to obſerve, that ſentences, ſo conſtructed as to make the ſound always ſwell and grow towards the end, and to reſt either on a laſt long or a penult long ſyllable, give a diſcourſe the tone of declamation. The ear ſoon becomes acquainted with the melody, and is apt to be cloyed with it. If we would keep up the attention of the reader or hearer, if we would preſerve vivacity and ſtrength in our compoſition, we muſt be very attentive to vary our meaſures. This regards the diſtribution of the members, as well as the cadence of the period. Sentences conſtructed in a ſimilar manner, with the pauſes falling at equal intervals, ſhould never follow one another. Short ſentences ſhould be intermixed with long and ſwelling ones, to render diſcourſe ſprightly, as well as magnificent. Even diſcords, properly introduced, abrupt ſounds, departures from regular cadence, have ſometimes a good effect. Monotony is the great fault into which writers are apt to fall, who are fond of harmonious arrangement: and to have only one tune, or meaſure, is not much better than having none at all. A very vulgar ear will enable a writer to catch ſome one melody, and to form the run of his ſentences according to it; which ſoon proves diſguſting. But a juſt and correct ear is requiſite for varying and diverſifying the melody: and hence we ſo ſeldom meet

with authors, who are remarkably happy in this reſpect.

Though attention to the muſic of ſentences muſt not be neglected, yet it muſt alſo be kept within proper bounds: for all appearances of an author's affecting harmony, are diſagreeable; eſpecially when the love of it betrays him ſo far, as to ſacrifice, in any inſtance, perſpicuity, preciſion, or ſtrength of ſentiment to ſound. All unmeaning words: introduced merely to round the period, or fill up the melody, *complementa numerorum* as Cicero calls them, are great blemiſhes in writing. They are childiſh and puerile ornaments, by which a ſentence always loſes more in point of weight, than it can gain by ſuch additions to the beauty of its ſound. Senſe has its own harmony, as well as ſound; and, where the ſenſe of a period is expreſſed with clearneſs, force, and dignity, it will ſeldom happen but the words will ſtrike the ear agreeably; at leaſt, a very moderate attention is all that is requiſite for making the cadence of ſuch a period pleaſing: and the effect of greater attention is often no other, than to render compoſition languid and enervated. After all the labor which Quinctilian beſtows on regulating the meaſures of proſe, he comes at laſt, with his uſual good ſenſe, to this concluſion; "In univerſum, ſi ſit neceſſe, duram potius atque "aſperam compoſitionem malim eſſe, quam ef- "feminatam ac enervem, qualis apud multos. "Ideoque, vincta quædam de induſtria ſunt ſol- "venda, ne laborata videantur; neque ullum

" idoneum aut aptum verbum prætermittamus, " gratia lenitatis *." (Lib. ix. c. 4.)

Cicero, as I before obſerved, is one of the moſt remarkable patterns of a harmonious ſtyle. His love of it, however, is too viſible; and the pomp of his numbers ſometimes detracts from his ſtrength. That noted cloſe of his, *eſſe videatur*, which, in the oration pro lege Manilia, occurs eleven times, expoſed him to cenſure among his cotemporaries. We muſt obſerve, however, in defence of this great orator, that there is a remarkable union in his ſtyle, of harmony with eaſe, which is always a great beauty; and if his harmony be ſometimes thought ſtudied, that ſtudy appears to have coſt him little trouble.

Among our Engliſh claſſics, not many are diſtinguiſhed for muſical arrangement. Milton, in ſome of his proſe works, has very finely turned periods; but the writers of his age indulged a liberty of inverſion, which now would be reckoned contrary to purity of ſtyle: and though this allowed their ſentences to be more ſtately and ſonorous, yet it gave them too much of a Latinized conſtruction and order. Of later writers, Shaftsbury is, upon the whole, the moſt correct in his

* " Upon the whole, I would rather chuſe, that compoſition " ſhould appear rough and harſh, if that be neceſſary, than " that it ſhould be enervated and effeminate ſuch as we find " the ſtyle of too many. Some ſentences, therefore, which we " have ſtudiously formed into melody, ſhould be thrown looſe, " that they may not ſeem too much labored; nor ought we " ever to omit any proper or expreſſive word, for the ſake of " ſmoothing a period."

numbers. As his ear was delicate, he has attended to muſic in all his ſentences; and he is peculiarly happy in this reſpect, that he has avoided the monotony into which writers, who ſtudy the grace of ſound, are very apt to fall, having diverſified his periods with great variety. Mr. Addiſon has alſo much harmony in his ſtyle; more eaſy and ſmooth, but leſs varied, than Lord Saftſbury. Sir William Temple is, in general, very flowing and agreeable. Archbiſhop Tillotſon is too often careleſs and languid; and is much outdone by Biſhop Atterbury in the muſic of his periods. Dean Swift deſpiſed muſical arrangement altogether.

Hitherto I have diſcourſed of agreeable ſound, or modulation, in general. It yet remains to treat of a higher beauty of this kind; the ſound adapted to the ſenſe. The former was no more than a ſimple accompaniment, to pleaſe the ear; the latter ſuppoſes a peculiar expreſſion given to the muſic. We may remark two degrees of it: Firſt, the current of ſound, adapted to the tenor of a diſcourſe; next, a particular reſemblance effected between ſome object, and the ſounds that are employed in deſcribing it.

Firſt, I ſay, the current of ſound may be adapted to the tenor of a diſcourſe. Sounds have, in many reſpects, a correſpondence with our ideas; partly natural, partly the effect of artificial aſſociations. Hence it happens, that any one modulation of ſound continued, imprints on our ſtyle a certain charac[illegible] and expreſſion.

Sentences conſtructed with the Ciceronian fulneſs and ſwell, produce the impreſſion of what is important, magnificent, ſedate. For this is the natural tone which ſuch a courſe of ſentiment aſſumes. But they ſuit no violent paſſion, no eager reaſoning, no familiar addreſs. Theſe always require meaſures briſker, eaſier, and often more abrupt. And, therefore, to ſwell, or let down the periods, as the ſubject demands, is a very important rule in oratory. No one tenor whatever, ſuppoſing it to produce no bad effect from ſatiety, will anſwer to all different compoſitions; nor even to all the parts of the ſame compoſition. It were as abſurd to write a panegyric, and an invective, in a ſtyle of the ſame cadence, as to ſet the words of a tender love-ſong to the air of a warlike march.

Obſerve how finely the following ſentence of Cicero is adapted, to repreſent the tranquillity and eaſe of a ſatisfied ſtate: "Etſi homini nihil "eſt magis optandum quam proſpera, æquabilis, "perpetuaque fortuna, ſecundo vitæ fine ulla "offenſione curſu; tamen, ſi mihi tranquilla & "placata omnia fuiſſent, incredibili quadam & "pene divina, qua nunc veſtro beneficio fruor, "lætitiæ voluptate caruiſſem *." Nothing was ever more perfect in its kind: it paints, if we may ſo ſpeak, to the ear. But, who would not have laughed, if Cicero had employed ſuch periods, or ſuch a cadence as this, in inveighing

* Orat. ad Quirites, poſt reditum.

againſt Mark Antony, or Catiline? What is requiſite, therefore, is, that we previouſly fix, in our mind, a juſt idea of the general tone of ſound which ſuits our ſubject; that is, which the ſentiments we are to expreſs, moſt naturally aſſume, and in which they moſt commonly vent themſelves; whether round and ſmooth, or ſtately and ſolemn, or briſk and quick, or interrupted and abrupt. This general idea muſt direct the run of our compoſition; to ſpeak in the ſtyle of muſic, muſt give us the key-note, muſt form the ground of the melody; varied and diverſified in parts, according as either our ſentiments are diverſified, or as is requiſite for producing a ſuitable variety to gratify the ear.

It may be proper to remark, that our tranſlators of the bible have often been happy in ſuiting their numbers to the ſubject. Grave, ſolemn, and majeſtic ſubjects undoubtedly require ſuch an arrangement of words as runs much on long ſyllables; and, particularly, they require the cloſe to reſt upon ſuch. The very firſt verſes of the bible, are remarkable for this melody: "In "the beginning, God created the heavens and "the earth; and the earth was without form, and "void; and darkneſs was upon the face of the deep; "and the ſpirit of God moved on the face of the "waters." Several other paſſages, particularly ſome of the Pſalms, afford ſtriking examples of this ſort of grave, melodious conſtruction. Any compoſition that riſes conſiderably above the ordinary tone of proſe, ſuch as monumental

inſcriptions, and panegyrical characters, naturally runs into numbers of this kind.

But, in the next place, beſides the general correſpondence of the current of ſound with the current of thought, there may be a more particular expreſſion attempted, of certain objects, by means of reſembling ſounds. This can be; ſometimes, accompliſhed in proſe-compoſition; but there only in a more faint degree; nor is it ſo much expected there. In poetry, chiefly, it is looked for; where attention to ſound is more demanded, and where the inverſions and liberties of poetical ſtyle give us a greater command of ſound; aſſiſted, too, by the verſification, and that *cantus obſcurior*, to which we are naturally led in reading poetry. This requires a little more illuſtration.

The ſounds of words may be employed for repreſenting, chiefly, three claſſes of objects; firſt, other ſounds; ſecondly, motion; and thirdly, the emotions and paſſions of the mind.

Firſt, I ſay, by a proper choice of words, we may produce a reſemblance of other ſounds which we mean to deſcribe, ſuch as, the noiſe of waters, the roaring of winds, or the murmuring of ſtreams. This is the ſimpleſt inſtance of this ſort of beauty. For the medium through which we imitate here, is a natural one; ſounds repreſented by other ſounds; and between ideas of the ſame ſenſe, it is eaſy to form a connexion. No very great art is required in a poet, when he is deſcribing ſweet and ſoft ſounds, to make uſe

of ſuch words as have moſt liquids and vowels, and glide the ſofteſt; or, when he is deſcribing harſh ſounds, to throw together a number of harſh ſyllables which are of difficult pronunciation. Here the common ſtructure of language aſſiſts him; for, it will be found, that, in moſt languages, the names of many particular ſounds are ſo formed, as to carry ſome affinity to the ſound which they ſignify; as with us, the *whiſtling* of winds, the *buz* and *hum* of inſects, the *hiſs* of ſerpents, the *craſh* of falling timber; and many other inſtances, where the word has been plainly framed upon the ſound it repreſents. I ſhall produce a remarkable example of this beauty from Milton, taken from two paſſages in Paradiſe Loſt, deſcribing the ſound made, in the one, by the opening of the gates of hell; in the other, by the opening of thoſe of heaven. The contraſt between the two, diſplays, to great advantage, the poet's art. The firſt is the opening of hell's gates:

——————— On a ſudden, open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and jarring ſound,
Th'infernal doors; and on their hinges grate
Harſh thunder, ——————— B. II. v. 879.

Obſerve, now, the ſmoothneſs of the other:

——————— Heaven open'd wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious ſound
On golden hinges moving. ——————— B. VII. v. 205.

The following beautiful paſſage from Taſſo's Gieruſalemme,

Gieruſalemme, has been often admired, on account of the imitation effected by ſound of the thing repreſented:

Chiama gli abitator dell' ombre eterne
Il rauco ſuon della tartarea tromba:
Treman le ſpazioſe atre caverne,
E l'aer cieco a quel romor rimbomba.
Nè ſtridendo mai dalle ſuperne
Regioni del cielo, il folgor piomba,
Nè sì ſcoſſa giammai trema la terra,
Quando i vapori in ſen gravida ſerra.

CANT. IV. Stanz. 3.

The ſecond claſs of objects, which the ſound of words is often employed to imitate, is, motion, as it is ſwift or ſlow, violent or gentle, equable or interrupted, eaſy or accompanied with effort. Though there be no natural affinity between ſound, of any kind, and motion, yet, in the imagination, there is a ſtrong one; as appears from the connexion between muſic and dancing. And, therefore, here it is in the poet's power to give us a lively idea of the kind of motion he would deſcribe, by means of ſounds which correſpond, in our imagination, with that motion. Long ſyllables naturally give the impreſſion of ſlow motion; as in this line of Virgil:

Olli inter ſeſe magna vi brachia tollunt.

A ſucceſſion of ſhort ſyllables preſents quick motion to the mind; as,

Quadrupedante putrem ſonitu quatit ungula campum.

Both Homer and Virgil are great maſters of this beauty; and their works abound with inſtances of it; moſt of them, indeed, ſo often quoted, and ſo well known, that it is needleſs to produce them. I ſhall give one inſtance, in Engliſh, which ſeems happy. It is the deſcription of a ſudden calm on the ſeas, in a poem, entitled, *The Fleece.*

——————————— With eaſy courſe
The veſſels glide; unleſs their ſpeed be ſtopp'd
By dead calms, that often lie on theſe ſmooth ſeas
When ev'ry zephyr ſleeps; then the ſhrouds drop;
The downy feather on the cordage hung,
Moves not; the flat ſea ſhines like yellow gold
Fus'd in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of ſome old temple wide. ———————

The third ſet of objects, which I mentioned the ſound of words as capable of repreſenting, conſiſts of the paſſions and emotions of the mind. Sound may, at firſt view, appear foreign to theſe; but, that here, alſo, there is ſome ſort of connexion, is ſufficiently proved by the power which muſic has to awaken, or to aſſiſt certain paſſions, and, according as its ſtrain is varied, to introduce one train of ideas, rather than another. This, indeed, logically ſpeaking, cannot be called

a reſemblance between the ſenſe and the ſound, ſeeing long or ſhort ſyllables have no natural reſemblance to any thought or paſſion. But if the arrangement of ſyllables, by their ſound alone, recal one ſet of ideas more readily than another, and diſpoſe the mind for entering into that affection which the poet means to raiſe, ſuch arrangement may, juſtly enough; be ſaid to reſemble the ſenſe, or be ſimilar and correſpondent to it. I admit, that, in many inſtances, which are ſuppoſed to diſplay this beauty of accommodation of ſound to the ſenſe, there is much room for imagination to work; and, according as a reader is ſtruck by a paſſage, he will often fancy a reſemblance between the ſound and the ſenſe, which others cannot diſcover. He modulates the numbers to his own diſpoſition of mind; and, in effect, makes the muſic which he imagines himſelf to hear. However, that there are real inſtances of this kind, and that poetry is capable of ſome ſuch expreſſion, cannot be doubted. Dryden's ode on St. Cecilia's Day, affords a very beautiful exemplification of it, in the Engliſh language. Without much ſtudy or reflection, a poet deſcribing pleaſure, joy, and agreeable objects, from the feeling of his ſubject, naturally runs into ſmooth, liquid, and flowing numbers.

——————————— Namque ipſa decoram
Cæſariem nato genetrix, lumenque juventæ
Purpureum, & lætos oculis afflarat honores.

ÆN. I.

In general, they always imply ſome departure from ſimplicity of expreſſion; the idea which we intend to convey, not only enunciated to others, but enunciated, in a particular manner, and with ſome circumſtance added, which is deſigned to render the impreſſion more ſtrong and vivid. When I ſay, for inſtance, "that a good man "enjoys comfort in the midſt of adverſity;" I juſt expreſs my thought in the ſimpleſt manner poſſible. But when I ſay, "to the upright there "ariſeth light in darkneſs;" the ſame ſentiment is expreſſed in a figurative ſtyle; a new circumſtance is introduced; light is put in the place of comfort, and darkneſs is uſed to ſuggeſt the idea of adverſity. In the ſame manner, to ſay, "it is "impoſſible, by any ſearch we can make, to "explore the divine nature fully," is, to make a ſimple propoſition. But when we ſay, "Canſt "thou, by ſearching, find out God? Canſt thou "find out the almighty to perfection? It is high "as heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than "hell, what canſt thou know?" This introduces a figure into ſtyle; the propoſition being not only expreſſed, but admiration and aſtoniſhment being expreſſed together with it.

But, though figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the moſt ſimple form of ſpeech, we are not thence to conclude, that

figures, the *Elements of Criticiſm* may be conſulted, where the ſubject is fully handled, and illuſtrated by a great variety of examples.

LECTURE XIV.

Origin and Nature of Figurative Language.

HAVING now finiſhed what related to the conſtruction of ſentences, I proceed to other rules concerning ſtyle. My general diviſion of the qualities of ſtyle, was into perſpicuity and ornament. Perſpicuity, both in ſingle words and in ſentences, I have conſidered. Ornament, as far as it ariſes from a graceful, ſtrong, or melodious conſtruction of words, has alſo been treated of. Another, and a great branch of the ornament of ſtyle, is, figurative language; which is now to be the ſubject of our conſideration, and will require a full diſcuſſion.

Our firſt inquiry muſt be, What is meant by figures of ſpeech *?

* On the ſubject of figures of ſpeech, all the writers who treat of rhetoric or compoſition, have inſiſted largely. To make references, therefore, on this ſubject, were endleſs. On the foundations of figurative language, in general, one of the moſt ſenſible and inſtructive writers, appears to me, to be M. Marſais, in his *Traité des Tropes pour ſervir d'Introduction à la Rhétorique, & à la Logique.* For obſervations on particular

of them; a caſt or turn peculiar to itſelf, which both diſtinguiſhes it from the reſt, and diſtinguiſhes it from ſimple expreſſion. Simple expreſſion juſt makes our idea known to others; but figurative language, over and above, beſtows a particular dreſs upon that idea; a dreſs, which both makes it be remarked, and adorns it. Hence, this ſort of language became early a capital object of attention to thoſe who ſtudied the powers of ſpeech.

Figures, in general, may be deſcribed to be that language, which is prompted either by the imagination, or by the paſſions. The juſtneſs of this deſcription will appear, from the more particular account I am afterwards to give of them. Rhetoricians commonly divide them into two great claſſes; figures of words, and figures of thought. The former, figures of words, are commonly called tropes, and conſiſt in a word's being employed to ſignify ſomething that is different from its original and primitive meaning; ſo that if you alter the word, you deſtroy the figure. Thus, in the inſtance I gave before; "light ariſeth to the upright, in darkneſs." The trope conſiſts, in "light and darkneſs" being not meant literally, but ſubſtituted for comfort and adverſity, on account of ſome reſemblance or analogy, which they are ſuppoſed to bear to theſe conditions of life. The other claſs, termed figures of thought, ſuppoſes the words to be uſed in their proper and literal meaning, and the figure to conſiſt in the turn of the thought;

as is the caſe in exclamations, interrogations, apoſtrophes, and compariſons; where, though you vary the words that are uſed, or tranſlate them from one language into another, you may, nevertheleſs, ſtill preſerve the ſame figure in the thought. This diſtinction, however, is of no great uſe; as nothing can be built upon it in practice; neither is it always very clear. It is of little importance, whether we give to ſome particular mode of expreſſion the name of a trope, or of a figure; provided we remember, that figurative language always imports ſome coloring of the imagination, or ſome emotion of paſſion, expreſſed in our ſtyle: and, perhaps, figures of imagination, and figures of paſſion, might be a more uſeful diſtribution of the ſubject. But without inſiſting on any artificial diviſions, it will be more uſeful, that I inquire into the origin and the nature of figures. Only, before proceeding to this, there are two general obſervations which it may be proper to premiſe.

The firſt is, concerning the uſe of rules with reſpect to figurative language. I admit, that perſons may both ſpeak and write with propriety, who know not the names of any of the figures of ſpeech, nor ever ſtudied any rules relating to them. Nature, as was before obſerved dictates the uſe of figures; and, like Monſ. Jourdain, in Moliere, who had ſpoken for forty years in proſe, without ever knowing it, many a one uſes metaphorical expreſſions to good purpoſe, without any idea of what a metaphor is.

It will not, however follow thence, that rules are of no ſervice. All ſcience ariſes from obſervations on practice. Practice has always gone before method and rule; but method and rule have afterwards improved and perfected practice, in every art. We, every day, meet with perſons who ſing agreeably, without knowing one note of the gamut. Yet, it has been found of importance to reduce theſe notes to a ſcale, and to form an art of muſic; and it would be ridiculous to pretend, that the art is of no advantage, becauſe the practice is founded in nature. Propriety and beauty of ſpeech, are certainly as improvable as the ear or the voice; and to know the principles of this beauty, or the reaſons which render one figure, or one manner of ſpeech preferable to another, cannot fail to aſſiſt and direct a proper choice.

But I muſt obſerve, in the next place, that although this part of ſtyle merit attention, and be a very proper object of ſcience and rule; although much of the beauty of compoſition depends on figurative language; yet we muſt beware of imagining that it depends ſolely, or even chiefly, upon ſuch language. It is not ſo. The great place which the doctrine of tropes and figures has occupied in ſyſtems of rhetoric; the over-anxious care which has been ſhown in giving names to a vaſt variety of them, and in ranging them under different claſſes, has often led perſons to imagine, that, if their compoſition was well beſpangled with a number of theſe

ornaments of ſpeech, it wanted no other beauty; whence has ariſen much ſtiffneſs and affectation. For it is, in truth, the ſentiment or paſſion, which lies under the figured expreſſion, that gives it any merit. The figure is only the dreſs; the ſentiment is the body and the ſubſtance. No figures will render a cold or an empty compoſition intereſting; whereas, if a ſentiment be ſublime or pathetic, it can ſupport itſelf perfectly well, without any borrowed aſſiſtance. Hence ſeveral of the moſt affecting and admired paſſages of the beſt authors, are expreſſed in the ſimpleſt language. The following ſentiment from Virgil, for inſtance, makes its way at once to the heart, without the help of any figure whatever. He is deſcribing an Argive, who falls in battle, in Italy, at a great diſtance from his native country:

Sternitur, infelix, alieno vulnere, cœlumque
Aſpicit, & dulces moriens reminiſcitur Argos*.
Æn. x. 781.

A ſingle ſtroke of this kind, drawn as by the very pencil of nature, is worth a thouſand figures.

* "Anthares had from Argos travell'd far,
"Alcides' friend, and brother of the war;
"Now falling, by another's wound, his eyes
"He caſts to Heaven, on Argos thinks, and dies."

In this translation, much of the beauty of the original is loſt. "On Argos thinks and dies," is by no means equal to "dulces "moriens reminiſcitur Argos:" As he dies, "he remembers "his beloved Argos." —— It is indeed obſervable, that in

In the ſame manner, the ſimple ſtyle of ſcripture, "he ſpoke, and it was done, he commanded, "and it ſtood faſt." — "God ſaid, let there be "light; and there was light," imports a lofty conception to much greater advantage, than if it had been decorated by the moſt pompous metaphors. The fact is, that the ſtrong pathetic, and the pure ſublime, not only have little dependance on figures of ſpeech, but, generally, reject them. The proper region of theſe ornaments is, where a moderate degree of elevation and paſſion is predominant; and there they contribute to the embelliſhment of diſcourſe, only,

moſt of thoſe tender and pathetic paſſages, which do ſo much honor to Virgil, that great poet expreſſes himſelf with the utmoſt ſimplicity; as,

Te, dulcis conjux, te ſolo in littore ſecum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.

GEORG. IV.

And ſo in that moving prayer of Evander, upon his parting with his ſon Pallas:

At vos, o ſuperi! & divum tu maxime rector
Jupiter, Arcadii quæſo miſereſcite regis.
Et patrias audite preces. Si numina veſtra
Incolumem Pallanta mihi, ſi fata reſervant,
Si viſurus eum viro, & venturus in unum,
Vitam oro; patiar quemvis durare laborem!
Sin aliquem infandum caſum, fortuna, minaris,
Nunc, o nunc liceat crudelem abrumpere vitam!
Dum curæ ambiguæ, dum ſpes incerta futuri;
Dum te, chare puer! mea ſera & ſola voluptas!
Amplexu teneo; gravior ne nuncius aures
Vulneret —— ÆN. VIII 572.

when there is a baſis of ſolid thought and natural ſentiment; when they are inſerted in their proper place; and when they riſe, of themſelves, from the ſubject, without being ſought after.

Having premiſed theſe obſervations, I proceed to give an account of the origin and nature of figures; principally of ſuch as have their dependance on language; including that numerous tribe, which the rhetoricians call tropes.

At the firſt riſe of language, men would begin with giving names to the different objects which they diſcerned, or thought of. This nomenclature would, at the beginning, be very narrow. According as men's ideas multiplied, and their acquaintance with objects increaſed, their ſtock of names and words would increaſe alſo. But to the infinite variety of objects and ideas, no language is adequate. No language is ſo copious, as to have a ſeparate word for every ſeparate idea. Men naturally ſought to abridge this labor of multiplying words *in infinitum*; and, in order to lay leſs burden on their memories, made one word, which they had already appropriated to a certain idea or object, ſtand alſo for ſome other idea or object; between which and the primary one, they found, or fancied, ſome relation. Thus, the prepoſition, *in*, was originally invented to expreſs the circumſtance of place: "The man was killed *in* the wood." In progreſs of time, words were wanted to expreſs men's being connected with certain conditions of fortune, or certain ſituations of mind; and ſome

reſemblance, or analogy, being fancied between theſe, and the place of bodies, the word, *in*, was employed to expreſs men's being ſo circumſtanced; as, one's being *in* health, or *in* ſickneſs, *in* proſperity or *in* adverſity, *in* joy or *in* grief, *in* doubt, or *in* danger, or *in* ſafety. Here we ſee this prepoſition, *in*, plainly aſſuming a tropical ſignification, or carried off from its original meaning, to ſignify ſomething elſe, which relates to, or reſembles it.

Tropes of this kind abound in all languages, and are plainly owing to the want of proper words. The operations of the mind and affections, in particular, are, in moſt languages, deſcribed by words taken from ſenſible objects. The reaſon is plain. The names of ſenſible objects, were, in all languages, the words moſt early introduced; and were, by degrees, extended to thoſe mental objects, of which men had more obſcure conceptions, and to which they found it more difficult to aſſign diſtinct names. They borrowed, therefore, the name of ſome ſenſible idea, where their imagination found ſome affinity. Thus, we ſpeak of, a *piercing* judgment, and a *clear* head; a *ſoft* or a *hard* heart; a *rough* or a *ſmooth* behaviour. We ſay, *inflamed* by anger, *warmed* by love, *ſwelled* with pride, *melted* into grief; and theſe are almoſt the only ſignificant words which we have for ſuch ideas.

But, although the barrenneſs of language, and the want of words, be doubtleſs one cauſe of the

invention of tropes; yet it is not the only, nor, perhaps, even the principal ſource of this form of ſpeech. Tropes have ariſen more frequently, and ſpread themſelves wider, from the influence which imagination poſſeſſes over all language. The train on which this has proceeded among all nations, I ſhall endeavour to explain.

Every object which makes any impreſſion on the human mind, is conſtantly accompanied with certain circumſtances and relations, that ſtrike us at the ſame time. It never preſents itſelf to our view, *iſolé*, as the French expreſs it; that is independent on, and ſeparated from, every other thing; but always occurs as ſome how related to other objects; going before them, or following after them; their effect or their cauſe; reſembling them, or oppoſed to them; diſtinguiſhed by certain qualities, or ſurrounded with certain circumſtances. By this means, every idea or object carries in its train ſome other ideas, which may be conſidered as its acceſſories. Theſe acceſſories often ſtrike the imagination more than the principal idea itſelf. They are, perhaps, more agreeable ideas; or they are more familiar to our conceptions; or they recal to our memory a greater variety of important circumſtances. The imagination is more diſpoſed to reſt upon ſome of them; and therefore, inſtead of uſing the proper name of the principal idea which it means to expreſs, it employs, in its place, the name of the acceſſory or correſpondent idea; although the principal have a proper and well-known

name of its own. Hence a vaſt variety of tropical or figurative words obtain currency in all languages, through choice, not neceſſity; and men of lively imaginations are every day adding to their number.

Thus, when we deſign to intimate the period, at which a ſtate enjoyed moſt reputation or glory, it were eaſy to employ the proper words for expreſſing this; but as this readily connects, in our imagination, with the flouriſhing period of a plant or a tree, we lay hold of this correſpondent idea, and ſay, "the Roman "empire flouriſhed moſt under Auguſtus." The leader of a faction, is plain language; but, becauſe the head is the principal part of the human body, and is ſuppoſed to direct all the animal operations, reſting upon this reſemblance, we ſay, "Catiline was the head of the party." The word, *voice*, was originally invented to ſignify the articulate ſound, formed by the organs of the mouth; but, as by means of it men ſignify their ideas and their intentions to each other, *voice* ſoon aſſumed a great many other meanings, all derived from this primary effect. "To give our voice" for any thing, ſignified, to give our ſentiment in favor of it. Not only ſo; but *voice* was transferred to ſignify any intimation of will or judgment, though given without the leaſt interpoſition of voice in its literal ſenſe, or any ſound uttered at all. Thus we ſpeak of liſtening to the *voice* of conſcience, the *voice* of nature, the *voice* of God. This uſage takes

takes place, not ſo much from barrenneſs of language, or want of a proper word, as from an alluſion which we chuſe to make to *voice*, in its primary ſenſe, in order to convey our idea, connected with a circumſtance which appears to the fancy to give it more ſprightlineſs and force.

The account which I have now given, and which ſeems to be a full and fair one, of the introduction of tropes into all languages, coincides with what Cicero ſhortly hints, in his third book De Oratore. "Modus transferendi verba late "patet; quam neceſſitas primum genuit, coacta "inopia & anguſtiis; poſt autem delectatio, jucun-"ditaſque celebravit. Nam ut veſtis, frigoris "depellendi cauſa reperta primo, poſt adhiberi "cæpta eſt ad ornatum etiam corporis dignitatem, "ſic verbi tranſlatio inſtituta eſt inopiæ cauſa, "frequentata, delectationis *."

From what has been ſaid, it clearly appears, how that muſt come to paſs, which I had occaſion to mention in a former lecture, that all languages are moſt figurative in their early ſtate. Both the cauſes to which I aſcribed the origin of figures, concur in producing this effect: at

* "The figurative uſage of words is very extenſive; an "uſage to which neceſſity firſt gave riſe, on account of the "paucity of words, and barrenneſs of language, but which the "pleaſure that was found in it afterwards rendered frequent. "For, as garments were firſt contrived to defend our bodies, "from the cold, and afterwards were employed for the "purpoſe of ornament and dignity, ſo figures of ſpeech, "introduced by want, were cultivated for the ſake of enter-"tainment."

the beginnings of ſociety. Language is then moſt barren; the ſtock of proper names, which have been invented for things, is ſmall; and, at the ſame time, imagination exerts great influence over the conceptions of men, and their method of uttering them; ſo that, both from neceſſity and from choice, their ſpeech will, at that period, abound in tropes. For the ſavage tribes of men are always much given to wonder and aſtoniſhment. Every new object ſurpriſes, terrifies, and makes a ſtrong impreſſion on their mind; they are governed by imagination and paſſion, more than by reaſon; and, of courſe, their ſpeech muſt be deeply tinctured by their genius. In fact, we find, that this is the character of the American and Indian languages; bold, pictureſque, and metaphorical; full of ſtrong alluſions to ſenſible qualities, and to ſuch objects as ſtruck them moſt in their wild and ſolitary life. An Indian chief makes a harangue to his tribe, in a ſtyle full of ſtronger metaphors than an European would uſe in an epic poem.

As language makes gradual progreſs towards refinement, almoſt every object comes to have a proper name given to it, and perſpicuity and preciſion are more ſtudied. But ſtill, for the reaſons before given, borrowed words, or as rhetoricians call them, tropes, muſt continue to occupy a conſiderable place. In every language, too, there are a multitude of words, which, though they were figurative in their firſt application to certain objects, yet, by long uſe, loſe that figurative power

wholly, and come to be conſidered as ſimple and literal expreſſions. In this caſe, are the terms which I remarked before, as transferred from ſenſible qualities to the operations or qualities of the mind, a *piercing* judgment, a *clear* head, a *hard* heart, and the like. There are other words which remain in a ſort of middle ſtate; which have neither loſt wholly their figurative application, nor yet retain ſo much of it, as to imprint any remarkable character of figured language on our ſtyle; ſuch as theſe phraſes, "apprehend one's meaning;" "enter on a ſubject;" "follow out an argument;" "ſtir up ſtrife;" and a great many more, of which our language is full. In the uſe of ſuch phraſes, correct writers will always preſerve a regard to the figure or alluſion on which they are founded, and will be careful not to apply them in any way that is inconſiſtent with it. One may be "ſheltered "under the patronage of a great man;" but it were wrong to ſay, "ſheltered under the maſk of "diſſimulation," as a maſk conceals, but does not ſhelter. An object in deſcription, may be "clothed," if you will, "with epithets;" but it is not ſo proper to ſpeak of its being clothed "with circumſtances;" as the word "circumſtances," alludes to ſtanding round, not to clothing. Such attentions as theſe are requiſite in the common run of ſtyle.

What has been ſaid on this ſubject, tends to throw light on the nature of language in general; and will lead to the reaſons, why tropes or figures contribute to the beauty and grace of ſtyle.

First, they enrich language, and render it more copious. By their means, words and phraſes are multiplied for expreſſing all ſorts of ideas; for deſcribing even the minuteſt differences; the niceſt ſhades and colors of thought; which no language could poſſibly do by proper words alone, without aſſiſtance from tropes.

Secondly, they beſtow dignity upon ſtyle. The familiarity of common words, to which our ears are much accuſtomed, tends to degrade ſtyle. When we want to adapt our language to the tone of an elevated ſubject, we would be greatly at a loſs, if we could not borrow aſſiſtance from figures; which properly employed, have a ſimilar effect on language, with what is produced by the rich and ſplendid dreſs of a perſon of rank; to create reſpect, and to give an air of magnificence to him who wears it. Aſſiſtance of this kind, is often needed in proſe compoſitions; but poetry could not ſubſiſt without it. Hence figures form the conſtant language of poetry. To ſay, that "the ſun riſes," is trite and common; but it becomes a magnificent image when expreſſed, as Mr. Thomſon has done:

> But yonder comes the powerful king of day
> Rejoicing in the eaſt. ———

To ſay, that "men are ſubject alike to death," preſents only a vulgar idea; but it riſes and fills the imagination, when painted thus by Horace:

Pallida mors æquo pulſat pede, pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres.

Or,

Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium,
Verſatur urna, ſerius, ocyus,
Sors exitura, & nos in æternum
Exilium impoſitura cymbæ*.

In the third place, figures give us the pleaſure of enjoying two objects preſented together to our view, without confuſion; the principal idea which is the ſubject of the diſcourſe, along with its acceſſory, which gives it the figurative dreſs. We ſee one thing in another, as Ariſtotle expreſſes it; which is always agreeable to the mind. For there it nothing with which the fancy is more delighted, than with compariſons, and reſemblances of objects; and all tropes are founded upon ſome relation or analogy between one thing and another. When, for inſtance, in place of "youth," I ſay, the "morning of life;" the fancy is immediately entertained with all the

* With equal pace, impartial fate,
Knocks at the palace, and the cottage gate.

Or,

We all muſt tread the paths of fate;
And ever ſhakes the mortal urn;
Whoſe lot embarks us, ſoon or late,
On Charon's boat; ah! never to return.

FRANCIS.

reſembling circumſtances which preſently occur between theſe two objects. At one moment, I have in my eye a certain period of human life, and a certain time of the day, ſo related to each other, that the imagination plays between them with pleaſure, and contemplates two ſimilar objects, in one view, without embarraſſment or confuſion. Not only ſo, but,

In the fourth place, figures are attended with this farther advantage, of giving us frequently a much clearer and more ſtriking view of the principal object, than we could have if it were expreſſed in ſimple terms, and diveſted of its acceſſory ideas. This is, indeed, their principal advantage, in virtue of which, they are very properly ſaid to illuſtrate a ſubject, or to throw light upon it. For they exhibit the object, on which they are employed, in a picturesque form; they can render an abſtract conception, in ſome degree, an object of ſenſe; they ſurround it with ſuch circumſtances as enable the mind to lay hold of it ſteadily, and to contemplate it fully. "Thoſe perſons," ſays one, "who gain the hearts of moſt people, who are "choſen as the companions of their ſofter hours, "and their reliefs from anxiety and care, are ſeldom "perſons of ſhining qualities, or ſtrong virtues: "it is rather the ſoft green of the ſoil, on which "we reſt our eyes, that are fatigued with behold-"ing more glaring objects." Here, by a happy alluſion to a color, the whole conception is conveyed clear and ſtrong to the mind in one word. By a well choſen figure, even conviction is aſſiſted,

and the impreſſion of a truth upon the mind made more lively and forcible than it would otherwiſe be. As in the following illuſtration of Dr. Young's: "When we dip too deep in pleaſure, we always "ſtir a ſediment that renders it impure and noxi-"ous;" or in this, "A heart boiling with vio-"lent paſſions, will always ſend up infatuating "fumes to the head." An image that preſents ſo much congruity between a moral and a ſenſible idea, ſerves like an argument from analogy to enforce what the author aſſerts, and to induce belief.

Beſides, whether we are endeavouring to raiſe ſentiments of pleaſure or averſion, we can always heighten the emotion by the figures which we introduce; leading the imagination to a train, either of agreeable or diſagreeable, of exalting or debaſing ideas, correſpondent to the impreſſion which we ſeek to make. When we want to render an object beautiful, or magnificent, we borrow images from all the moſt beautiful or ſplendid ſcenes of nature; we thereby, naturally, throw a luſtre over our object; we enliven the reader's mind; and diſpoſe him to go along with us in the gay and pleaſing impreſſions which we give him of the ſubject. This effect of figures is happily touched in the following lines of Dr. Akenſide, and illuſtrated by a very ſublime figure:

——— Then the inexpreſſive ſtrain,
Diffuſes its enchantment. Fancy dreams
Of ſacred fountains and Elyſian groves.

And vales of bliſs. The intellectual power
Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
And ſmiles. ———————

Pleaſ. of Imaginat. I. 124.

What I have now explained, concerning the uſe and effects of figures, naturally leads us to reflect on the wonderful power of language: and indeed, we cannot reflect on it without the higheſt admiration. What a fine vehicle is it now become for all the conceptions of the human mind: even for the moſt ſubtile and delicate workings of the imagination! What a pliant and flexible inſtrument in the hand of one who can employ it ſkilfully; prepared to take every form which he chuſes to give it! Not content with a ſimple communication of ideas and thoughts, it paints thoſe ideas to the eye; it gives coloring and relievo, even to the moſt abſtract conceptions. In the figures which it uſes, it ſets mirrors before us, where we may behold objects, a ſecond time, in their likeneſs. It entertains us, as with a ſucceſſion of the moſt ſplendid pictures; diſpoſes, in the moſt artificial manner, of the light and ſhade, for viewing every thing to the beſt advantage; in fine, from being a rude and imperfect interpreter of men's wants and neceſſities, it has now paſſed into an inſtrument of the moſt delicate and refined luxury.

To make theſe effects of figurative language ſenſible, there are few authors in the Engliſh language, whom I can refer to with more

advantage than Mr. Addiſon, whoſe imagination is, at once, remarkably rich, and remarkably correct and chaſte. When he is treating, for inſtance, of the effect which light and colors have to entertain the fancy, conſidered in Mr. Locke's view of them as ſecondary qualities, which have no real exiſtence in matter, but are only ideas in the mind, with what beautiful painting has he adorned this philoſophic ſpeculation? "Things," ſays he, "would make but a poor "appearance to the eye, if we ſaw them only in their "proper figures and motions. Now, we are every "where entertained with pleaſing ſhows and appa-"ritions; we diſcover imaginary glories in the hea-"vens, and in the earth, and ſee ſome of this viſio-"nary beauty poured out upon the whole crea-"tion. But what a rough unſightly ſketch of nature "ſhould we be entertained with, did all her co-"loring diſappear, and the ſeveral diſtinctions of "light and ſhade vaniſh? In ſhort, our ſouls are, "at preſent, delightfully loſt, and bewildered in "a pleaſing deluſion; and we walk about, like "the enchanted hero of a romance, who ſees "beautiful caſtles, woods, and meadows; and, "at the ſame time, hears the warbling of birds, "and the purling of ſtreams: but, upon the fin-"iſhing of ſome ſecret ſpell, the fantaſtic ſcene "breaks up, and the diſconſolate knight finds "himſelf on a barren heath, or in a ſolitary de-"ſert. It is not improbable, that ſomething like "this may be the ſtate of the ſoul after its firſt

"ſeparation, in reſpect of the images it will "receive from matter." No. 413. Spec.

Having thus explained, at ſufficient length, the origin, the nature, and the effects of tropes, I ſhould proceed next to the ſeveral kinds and diviſions of them. But, in treating of theſe, were I to follow the common tract of the ſcholaſtic writers on rhetoric, I ſhould ſoon become tedious, and, I apprehend, uſeleſs, at the ſame time. Their great buſineſs has been, with a moſt patient and frivolous induſtry, to branch them out under a vaſt number of diviſions, according to all the ſeveral modes in which a word may be carried from its literal meaning, into one that is figurative, without doing any more; as if the mere knowledge of the names and claſſes of all the tropes that can be formed, could be of any advantage towards the proper, or graceful uſe of language. All that I purpoſe is, to give, in a few words, before finiſhing this lecture, a general view of the ſeveral ſources whence the tropical meaning of words is derived: after which I ſhall, in ſubſequent lectures, deſcend to a more particular conſideration of ſome of the moſt conſiderable figures of ſpeech, and ſuch as are in moſt frequent uſe; by treating of which, I ſhall give all the inſtruction I can, concerning the proper employment of figurative language, and point out the errors and abuſes, which are apt to be committed in this part of ſtyle.

All tropes, as I before obſerved, are founded on the relation which one object bears to

another; in virtue of which, the name of the one can be ſubſtituted inſtead of the name of the other; and by ſuch a ſubſtitution, the vivacity of the idea is commonly meant to be increaſed. Theſe relations, ſome more, ſome leſs intimate, may all give riſe to tropes. One of the firſt and moſt obvious relations is, that between a cauſe and its effect. Hence, in figurative language, the cauſe is, ſometimes, put for the effect. Thus, Mr. Addiſon, writing of Italy:

> Bloſſoms, and fruits, and flowers, together riſe,
> And the whole year in gay confuſion lies.

Where the "whole year" is plainly intended, to ſignify the effects or productions of all the ſeaſons of the year. At other times, again, the effect is put for the cauſe; as, "grey hairs" frequently for old age, which cauſes grey hairs; and "ſhade," for trees that produce the ſhade. The relation between the container and the thing contained, is alſo ſo intimate and obvious, as naturally to give riſe to tropes:

> ——— Ille impiger hauſit
> Spumantem pateram & pleno ſe proluit auro.

Where every one ſees, that the cup and the gold are put for the liquor that was contained in the golden cup. In the ſame manner, the name of any country, is often uſed to denote the inhabitants of that country; and heaven, very

LECTURE XV.

METAPHOR.

AFTER the preliminary obſervations I have made, relating to figurative language in general, I come now to treat ſeparately of ſuch figures of ſpeech, as occur moſt frequently, and require particular attention: and I begin with metaphor. This is a figure founded entirely on the reſemblance which one object bears to another. Hence, it is much allied to ſimile, or compariſon; and is indeed no other than a compariſon, expreſſed in an abridged form. When I ſay of ſome great miniſter, "that he upholds the ſtate, "like a pillar which ſupports the weight of a "whole edifice," I fairly make a compariſon; but when I ſay of ſuch a miniſter, "that he is "the pillar of the ſtate," it is now become a metaphor. The compariſon betwixt the miniſter and a pillar, is made in the mind; but is expreſſed without any of the words that denote compariſon. The compariſon is only inſinuated, not expreſſed; the one object is ſuppoſed

to be ſo like the other, that, without formally drawing the compariſon, the name of the one may be put in the place of the name of the other. "The miniſter is the pillar of the ſtate." This, therefore, is a more lively and animated manner of expreſſing the reſemblances which imagination traces among objects. There is nothing which delights the fancy more, than this act of comparing things together, diſcovering reſemblances between them, and deſcribing them by their likeneſs. The mind thus employed, is exerciſed without being fatigued, and is gratified with the conſciouſneſs of its own ingenuity. We need not be ſurpriſed, therefore, at finding all language tinctured ſtrongly with metaphor. It inſinuates itſelf even into familiar converſation; and, unſought, riſes up of its own accord in the mind. The very words which I have caſually employed in deſcribing this, are a proof of what I ſay; *tinctured*, *inſinuates*, *riſes up*; are all of them metaphorical expreſſions, borrowed from ſome reſemblance which fancy forms between ſenſible objects, and the internal operations of the mind; and yet the terms are no leſs clear, and, perhaps, more expreſſive, than if words had been uſed, which were to be taken in the ſtrict and literal ſenſe.

Though all metaphor imports compariſon, and, therefore, is, in that reſpect, a figure of thought; yet, as the words in a metaphor are not taken literally, but changed from their proper to a figurative ſenſe, the metaphor is

commonly ranked among tropes or figures of words. But, provided the nature of it be well underſtood, it ſignifies very little whether we call it a figure or a trope. I have confined it to the expreſſion of reſemblance between two objects. I muſt remark, however, that the word metaphor is ſometimes uſed in a looſer and more extended ſenſe; for the application of a term in any figurative ſignification, whether the figure be founded on reſemblance, or on ſome other relation, which two objects bear to one another. For inſtance; when grey hairs are put for old age, as, "to bring one's grey hairs with ſorrow "to the grave;" ſome writers would call this a metaphor, though it is not properly one, but what rhetoricians call a metonymy; that is, the effect put for the cauſe; "grey hairs" being the effect of old age, but not bearing any ſort of reſemblance to it. Ariſtotle, in his Poetics, uſes metaphor in this extended ſenſe, for any figurative meaning impoſed upon a word; as a whole put for the part, or a part for the whole; a ſpecies for the genus, or a genus for the ſpecies. But it would be unjuſt to tax this moſt acute writer with any inaccuracy on this account; the minute ſubdiviſions, and various names of tropes, being unknown in his days, and the invention of latter rhetoricians. Now, however, when theſe diviſions are eſtabliſhed, it is inaccurate to call every figurative uſe of terms, promiſcuouſly, a metaphor.

Of

Of all the figures of ſpeech, none comes ſo near to painting as metaphor. Its peculiar effect is to give light and ſtrength to deſcription; to make intellectual ideas, in ſome ſort, viſible to the eye, by giving them color, and ſubſtance, and ſenſible qualities. In order to produce this effect, however, a delicate hand is required; for, by a very little inaccuracy, we are in hazard of introducing confuſion, in place of promoting perſpicuity. Several rules, therefore, are neceſſary to be given for the proper management of metaphors. But, before entering on theſe, I ſhall give one inſtance of a very beautiful metaphor, that I may ſhow the figure to full advantage. I ſhall take my inſtance from Lord Bolingbroke's Remarks on the Hiſtory of England. Juſt at the concluſion of his work, he is ſpeaking of the behaviour of Charles I. to his laſt parliament: "In a word," ſays he, "about "a month after their meeting, he diſſolved "them; and, as ſoon as he had diſſolved them, "he repented; but he repented too late of his "raſhneſs. Well might he repent; for the veſſel "was now full, and this laſt drop made the "waters of bitterneſs overflow." "Here," he adds, "we draw the curtain, and put an end "to our remarks." Nothing could be more happily thrown off. The metaphor, we ſee, is continued through ſeveral expreſſions. The *veſſel* is put for the ſtate, or temper of the nation already *full*, that is, provoked to the higheſt by former oppreſſions and wrongs; this *laſt drop*,

ſtands for the provocation recently received by the abrupt diſſolution of the parliament; and the *overflowing of the waters of bitterneſs*, beautifully expreſſes all the effects of reſentment let looſe by an exaſperated people.

On this paſſage, we may make two remarks in paſſing. The one, that nothing forms a more ſpirited and dignified concluſion of a ſubject, than a figure of this kind happily placed at the cloſe. We ſee the effect of it, in this inſtance. The author goes off with a good grace; and leaves a ſtrong and full impreſſion of his ſubject on the reader's mind. My other remark is, the advantage which a metaphor frequently has above a formal compariſon. How much would the ſentiment here have been enfeebled, if it had been expreſſed in the ſtyle of a regular ſimile, thus: "Well might he repent; for the ſtate of "the nation, loaded with grievances and pro- "vocations, reſembled a veſſel that was now "full, and this ſuperadded provocation, like "the laſt drop infuſed, made their rage and "reſentment, as waters of bitterneſs, overflow." It has infinitely more ſpirit and force as it now ſtands, in the form of a metaphor. "Well "might he repent; for the veſſel was now full; "and this laſt drop made the waters of bitter- "neſs overflow.

Having mentioned, with applauſe, this inſtance from Lord Bolingbroke, I think it incumbent on me here to take notice, that, though I may have recourſe to this author, ſometimes,

for examples of ſtyle, it is his ſtyle only, and not his ſentiments, that deſerve praiſe. It is, indeed, my opinion, that there are few writings in the Engliſh language, which, for the matter contained in them, can be read with leſs profit or fruit, than Lord Bolingbroke's works. His political writings have the merit of a very lively and eloquent ſtyle; but they have no other; being, as to the ſubſtance, the mere temporary productions of faction and party; no better, indeed, than pamphlets written for the day. His poſthumous, or, as they are called, his Philoſophical Works, wherein he attacks religion, have ſtill leſs merit; for they are as looſe in the ſtyle as they are flimſy in the reaſoning. An unhappy inſtance, this author is, of parts and genius ſo miſerably perverted by faction and paſſion, that, as his memory will deſcend to poſterity with little honor, ſo his productions will ſoon paſs, and are, indeed, already paſſing into neglect and oblivion.

Returning from this digreſſion to the ſubject before us, I proceed to lay down the rules to be obſerved in the conduct of metaphors; and which are much the ſame for tropes of every kind.

The firſt which I ſhall mention, is, that they be ſuited to the nature of the ſubject of which we treat; neither too many, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it; that we neither attempt to force the ſubject, by means of them, into a degree of elevation which is not congruous to

it; nor, on the other hand, allow it to ſink below its proper dignity. This is a direction which belongs to all figurative language, and ſhould be ever kept in view. Some metaphors are allowable, nay beautiful, in poetry, which it would be abſurd and unnatural to employ in proſe; ſome may be graceful in orations, which would be very improper in hiſtorical, or philoſophical compoſition. We muſt remember, that figures are the dreſs of our ſentiments. As there is a natural congruity between dreſs, and the character or rank of the perſon who wears it, a violation of which congruity never fails to hurt; the ſame holds preciſely as to the appliſtion of figures to ſentiment. The exceſſive, or unſeaſonable employment of them, is mere foppery in writing. It gives a boyiſh air to compoſition; and, inſtead of raiſing a ſubject, in fact, diminiſhes its dignity. For, as in life, true dignity muſt be founded on character, not on dreſs and appearance, ſo the dignity of compoſition muſt ariſe from ſentiment and thought, not from ornament. The affectation and parade of ornament, detract as much from an author, as they do from a man. Figures and metaphors, therefore, ſhould, on no occaſion, be ſtuck on too profuſely; and never ſhould be ſuch, as refuſe to accord with the ſtrain of our ſentiment. Nothing can be more unnatural, than for a writer to carry on a train of reaſoning, in the ſame ſort of figurative language, which he uſe in deſcription. When he reaſons,

we look only for perſpicuity; when he deſcribes, we expect embelliſhment; when he divides, or relates, we deſire plainneſs and ſimplicity. One of the greateſt ſecrets in compoſition is, to know when to be ſimple. This always gives a heightening to ornament, in its proper place. The right diſpoſition of the ſhade, makes the light and coloring ſtrike the more: "Is enim eſt "eloquens," ſays Cicero, "qui & humilia ſubti- "liter, & magna graviter, & mediocria temperate "poteſt dicere. — Nam qui nihil poteſt tranquille, "nihil leniter, nihil definite, diſtincte, poteſt "dicere, is, cum non præparatis auribus inflam- "mare rem cœpit, furere apud ſanos, & quaſi "inter ſobrios bacchari temulentus videtur *." This admonition ſhould be particularly attended to by young practitioners in the art of writing, who are apt to be carried away by an undiſtinguiſhing admiration of what is ſhowy and florid, whether in its place or not †.

* "He is truly eloquent, who can diſcourſe of humble "ſubjects in a plain ſtyle, who can treat important ones with "dignity, and ſpeak of things, which are of a middle nature, "in a temperate ſtrain. For one who, upon no occaſion, can "expreſs himſelf in a calm, orderly, diſtinct manner, when he "begins to be on fire before his readers are prepared to kindle "along with him, has the appearance of raving like a madman "among perſons who are in their ſenſes, or of reeling like a "drunkard in the midſt of ſober company."

† What perſon of the leaſt taſte, can bear the following paſſage, in a late hiſtorian. He is giving an account of the

The ſecond rule, which I give, reſpects the choice of objects, from whence metaphors, and other figures, are to be drawn. The field for figurative language is very wide. All nature, to ſpeak in the ſtyle of figures, opens its ſtores to us, and admits us to gather, from all ſenſible objects, whatever can illuſtrate intellectual or moral ideas. Not only the gay and ſplendid objects of ſenſe, but the grave, the terrifying, and even the gloomy and diſmal, can, on different occaſions, be introduced into figures with propriety. But we muſt beware of ever uſing ſuch alluſions as raiſe in the mind diſagreeable, mean, vulgar, or dirty ideas. Even, when metaphors are choſen in order to vilify and degrade any object, an author ſhould ſtudy never to be nauſeous in his alluſions. Cicero blames an orator of his time, for terming his enemy "ſtercus curiæ;" "quamvis ſit ſimile,"

famous act of parliament againſt irregular marriages in England: "The bill," ſays he, "underwent a great number of altera-"tions and amendments, which were not effected without "violent conteſt." This is plain language, ſuited to the ſubject; and we naturally expect, that he ſhould go on in the ſame ſtrain, to tell us, that, after theſe conteſts, it was carried by a great majority of voices, and obtained the royal aſſent. But how does he expreſs himſelf in finiſhing the period? "At length, however, it was floated through both houſes, "on the tide of a great majority, and ſteered into the ſafe "harbour of royal approbation." Nothing can be more puerile than ſuch language. Smollet's Hiſtory of England, Vol. V. p. 144.

ſays he, "tamen eſt deformis cogitatio ſimilitu-
"dinis." But, in ſubjects of dignity, it is an unpardonable fault to introduce mean and vulgar metaphors. In the treatiſe on the Art of Sinking, in Dean Swift's works, there is a full and humorous collection of inſtances of this kind, wherein authors, inſtead of exalting, have contrived to degrade, their ſubjects by the figures they employed. Authors of greater note than thoſe which are there quoted, have, at times, fallen into this error. Archbiſhop Tillotſon, for inſtance, is ſometimes negligent in his choice of metaphors; as, when ſpeaking of the day of judgment, he deſcribes the world, as "cracking about the "ſinners ears." Shakſpeare, whoſe imagination was rich and bold, in a much greater degree than it was delicate, often fails here. The following, for example, is a groſs tranſgreſſion; in his Henry V. having mentioned a dunghill, he preſently raiſes a metaphor from the ſteam of it; and on a ſubject too, that naturally led to much nobler ideas:

And thoſe that leave their valiant bones in France,
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
They ſhall be fam'd; for there the ſun ſhall greet them,
And draw their honors reeking up to heaven.
Act IV. Sc. 3.

In the third place, as metaphors ſhould be drawn from objects of ſome dignity, ſo particular care ſhould be taken that the reſemblance,

which is the foundation of the metaphor, be clear and perſpicuous, not far-fetched, nor difficult to diſcover. The tranſgreſſion of this rule makes, what are called harſh or forced metaphors, which are always diſpleaſing, becauſe they puzzle the reader, and, inſtead of illuſtrating the thought, render it perplexed and intricate. With metaphors of this kind, Cowley abounds. He, and ſome of the writers of his age, ſeem to have conſidered it as the perfection of wit, to hit upon likeneſſes between objects which no other perſon could have diſcovered; and, at the ſame time, to purſue thoſe metaphors ſo far, that it requires ſome ingenuity to follow them out, and comprehend them. This makes a metaphor reſemble an enigma; and is the very reverſe of Cicero's rule on this head: "Verecunda "debet eſſe tranſlatio; ut deducta eſſe in alienum "locum, non irruiſſe, atque ut voluntarie non vi "veniſſe videatur *." How forced and obſcure; for inſtance, are the following verſes of Cowley, ſpeaking of his miſtreſs:

Wo to her ſtubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the ſelf-ſame room,

* "Every metaphor ſhould be modeſt, ſo that it may carry "the appearance of having been led, not of having forced "itſelf into the place of that word whoſe room it occupies; "that it may ſeem to have come thither of its own accord, "and not by conſtraint." De Oratore, L. III. c. 53.

'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a Granada, ſhot into a magazine.
Then ſhall love keep the aſhes and torn parts,
Of both our broken hearts;
Shall out of both one new one make;
From her's th' alloy, from mine the metal take;
For of her heart, he from the flames will find
But little left behind;
Mine only will remain entire,
No droſs was there to periſh in the fire.

In this manner he addreſſes ſleep:

In vain, thou drowſy God, I thee invoke,
For thou who doſt from fumes ariſe,
Thou who man's ſoul doſt overſhade,
With a thick cloud by vapors made;
Canſt have no power to ſhut his eyes,
Whoſe flame's ſo pure, that it ſends up no ſmoke.
Yet how do tears but from ſome vapors riſe?
Tears that bewinter all my year;
The fate of Egypt I ſuſtain,
And never feel the dew of rain,
From clouds which in the head appear:
But all my too much moiſture owe
To overflowings of the heart below *.

Trite and common reſemblances ſhould indeed be avoided in our metaphors. To be new, and

* See an excellent criticiſm on this ſort of metaphyſical poetry, in Dr. Johnſon's Life of Cowley.

not vulgar, is a beauty. But when they are fetched from ſome likeneſs too remote, and lying too far out of the road of ordinary thought, then, beſides their obſcurity, they have alſo the diſadvantage of appearing labored, and as the French call it, "recherché." whereas metaphor, like every other ornament, loſes its whole grace, when it does not ſeem natural and eaſy.

It is but a bad and ungraceful ſoftening, which writers ſometimes uſe for a harſh metaphor, when they palliate it with the expreſſion, *as it were.* This is but an awkward parentheſis; and metaphors, which need this apology of an *as it were*, had, generally, be better omitted. Metaphors, too, borrowed from any of the ſciences, eſpecially ſuch of them as belong to particular profeſſions, are almoſt always faulty by their obſcurity.

In the fourth place, it muſt be carefully attended to, in the conduct of metaphors, never to jumble metaphorical and plain language together; never to conſtruct a period ſo, that part of it muſt be underſtood metaphorically, part literally: which always produces a moſt diſagreeable confuſion. Inſtances, which are but too frequent, even in good authors, will make this rule, and the reaſon of it, be clearly underſtood. In Mr. Pope's tranſlation of the Odyſſey, Penelope, bewailing the abrupt departure of her ſon Telemachus, is made to ſpeak thus:

> Long to my joys my deareſt Lord is loſt,
> His country's buckler, and the Grecian boaſt:

Now from my fond embrace, by tempeſts torn,
Our other column of the ſtate is borne:
Nor took a kind adieu, nor ſought conſent*!
IV. 960.

Here in one line, her ſon is figured as a column; and in the next, he returns to be a perſon, to whom it belongs to take adieu, and to aſk conſent. This is inconſiſtent. The poet ſhould either have kept himſelf to the idea of a man, in the literal ſenſe; or, if he figured him by a column, he ſhould have aſcribed nothing to him but what belonged to it. He was not at liberty to aſcribe to that column the actions and properties of a man. Such unnatural mixtures render the image indiſtinct; leaving it to waver, in our conception, between the figurative and the literal ſenſe. Horace's rule, which he applies to characters, ſhould be obſerved by all writers who deal in figures:

—— Servetur ad imum,
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, & ſibi conſtet.

Mr. Pope, elſewhere, addreſſing himſelf to the king, ſays,

* In the original, there is no alluſion to a column, and the metaphor is rightly ſupported:

Ἡ πριν μεν ποσιν ἑῳλον ἀπωλεσα θυμαλεοντα,
Παντοιῃς ἀρετῃσι κεκασμενον ἐν Δαναοισι
Ἑῳλον, τω κλεος ἐυρυ κατ' Ἑλλαδα και μεσον Ἀργος.
Νυν δ' αυ παιδ' ἀγαπητον ἀνηρειψαντο θυελλαι
Ἀκλεα ἐκ μεγαρων, οὐδ' ὁρμηθεντος ἀκουσα. Δ. 724.

To thee the world its preſent homage pays,
The harveſt early, but mature the praiſe.

This, though not ſo groſs, is a fault, however, of the ſame kind. It is plain, that, had not the rhyme miſled him to the choice of an improper phraſe, he would have ſaid,

The harveſt early, but mature the crop:

And ſo would have continued the figure which he had begun. Whereas, by dropping it unfiniſhed, and by employing the literal word, *praiſe*, when we were expecting ſomething that related to the harveſt, the figure is broken, and the two members of the ſentence have no proper correſpondent with each other:

The *Harveſt* early, but mature the *Praiſe*.

The works of Oſſian abound with beautiful and correct metaphors; ſuch as that on a hero: "In peace, thou art the gate of ſpring; in war, "the mountain ſtorm." Or this, on a woman: "She was covered with the light of beauty; "but her heart was the houſe of pride." They afford, however, one inſtance of the fault we are now cenſuring: "Trothal went forth with "the ſtream of his people, but they met a rock: "for Fingal ſtood unmoved; broken they rolled "back from his ſide. Nor did they roll in ſafety; "the ſpear of the king purſued their flight."

At the beginning, the metaphor is very beautiful. The ſtream, the unmoved rock, the waves rolling back broken, are expreſſions employed in the proper and conſiſtent language of figure; but, in the end, when we are told, "they did not "roll in ſafety, becauſe the ſpear of the king "purſued their flight," the literal meaning is improperly mixed with the metaphor: they are at one and the ſame time, preſented to us as *waves* that *roll*, and men that may be *purſued* and *wounded with a ſpear.* If it be faulty to jumble together, in this manner, metaphorical and plain language, it is ſtill more ſo,

In the fifth place, to make two different metaphors meet on one object. This is what is called mixed metaphor, and is indeed one of the groſſeſt abuſes of this figure; ſuch as Shakſpeare's expreſſion, "to take arms againſt a "ſea of troubles." This makes a moſt unnatural medley, and confounds the imagination entirely. Quinctilian has ſufficiently guarded us againſt it: "Id imprimis eſt cuſtodiendum, ut quo genere "cœperis tranſlationis, hoc finias. Multi autem "cum initium a tempeſtate ſumſerunt, incendio "aut ruina finiunt; quæ eſt inconſequentia rerum "fœdiſſima *." Obſerve, for inſtance, what an inconſiſtent groupe of objects is brought together

* "We muſt be particularly attentive to end with the ſame "kind of metaphor with which we have begun. Some, when "they begin the figure with a tempeſt, conclude it with a "conflagration; which forms a ſhameful inconſiſtency."

by Shakſpeare, in the following paſſage of the tempeſt; ſpeaking of perſons recovering their judgment after the enchantment, which held them, was diſſolved:

> ——— The charm diſſolves apace,
> And as the morning ſteals upon the night,
> Melting the darkneſs, ſo their riſing ſenſes
> Begin to chaſe the ignorant fumes that mantle
> Their clearer reaſon. ———

So many ill-ſorted things are here joined, that the mind can ſee nothing clearly; the morning *ſtealing* upon the darkneſs, and at the ſame time *melting* it; the ſenſes of men *chaſing fumes; ignorant fumes*, and *fumes* that *mantle*. So again in Romeo and Juliet:

> ——————— as glorious,
> As is a winged meſſenger from heaven,
> Unto the white upturned wondering eyes
> Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
> When he beſtrides the lazy pacing clouds,
> And ſails upon the boſom of the air.

Here, the angel is repreſented, as, at one moment, *beſtriding* the clouds, and *ſailing* upon the air; and upon the *boſom* of the air too; which forms ſuch a confuſed picture, that it is impoſſible for any imagination to comprehend it.

More correct writers than Shakſpeare, ſome times fall in this error of mixing metaphors.

It is ſurpriſing how the following inaccuracy ſhould have eſcaped Mr. Addiſon, in his Letter from Italy:

I bridle in my ſtruggling muſe with pain,
That longs to launch into a bolder ſtrain *.

The muſe, figured as a horſe, may be *bridled;* but when we ſpeak of *launching*, we make it a ſhip; and, by no force of imagination, can it be ſuppoſed both a horſe and a ſhip at one moment; *bridled*, to hinder it from *launching*. The ſame author, in one of his numbers in the Spectator, ſays, "There is not a ſingle view "of human nature, which is not ſufficient to "extinguiſh the ſeeds of pride." Obſerve the incoherence of the things here joined together, making "a view extinguiſh, and extinguiſh "ſeeds."

Horace alſo, is incorrect, in the following paſſage:

Urit enim fulgore ſuo qui prægravat artes
Infra ſe poſitas. ————————

Urit qui *prægravat.* — He dazzles who bears down with his weight; makes plainly an inconſiſtent mixture of metaphorical ideas. Neither can this other paſſage be altogether vindicated:

* In my obſervation on this paſſage, I find, that I had coincided with Dr. Johnſon, who paſſes a ſimilar cenſure upon it, in his life of Addiſon.

Ah! quanta laboras in Charybdi,
Digne puer, meliore flamma!

Where a whirlpool of water, Charybdis, is ſaid to be a flame, not good enough for this young man; meaning, that he was unfortunate in the object of his paſſion. Flame is, indeed, become almoſt a literal word for the paſſion of love; but as it ſtill retains, in ſome degree, its figurative power, it ſhould never have been uſed as ſynonymous with water, and mixed with it in the ſame metaphor. When Mr. Pope (Eloiſa to Abelard) ſays,

All then is full, poſſeſſing and poſſeſt,
No craving void left aking in the breaſt;

A *void* may, metaphorically, be ſaid to *crave*; but can a void be ſaid to *ake?*

A good rule has been given for examining the propriety of metaphors, when we doubt whether or not they be of the mixed kind; namely, that we ſhould try to form a picture upon them, and conſider how the parts would agree, and what ſort of figure the whole would preſent, when delineated with a pencil. By this means, we ſhould become ſenſible, whether inconſiſtent circumſtances were mixed, and a monſtrous image thereby produced, as in all thoſe faulty inſtances, I have now been giving; or whether the object was, all along, preſented in one natural and conſiſtent point of view.

As

As metaphors ought never to be mixed, ſo, in the ſixth place, we ſhould avoid crowding them together on the ſame object. Suppoſing each of the metaphors to be preſerved diſtinct, yet, if they be heaped on one another, they produce a confuſion ſomewhat of the ſame kind with the mixed metaphor. We may judge of this by the following paſſage from Horace:

Motum ex Metello conſule civicum,
Bellique cauſas, & vitia, & modos,
Ludumque fortunæ, graveſque
Principum amicitias, & arma
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,
Periculoſæ plenum opus aleæ,
Tractas, & incedis per ignes
Suppoſitos cineri doloſo *.

Lib. 2. 1.

This paſſage, though very poetical, is, however,

* Of warm commotions, wrathful jars,
The growing ſeeds of civil wars;
Of double fortune's cruel games,
The ſpecious means, the private aims,
And fatal friendships of the guilty great,
Alas! how fatal to the Roman ſtate!
Of mighty legions late ſubdued,
And arms with Latian blood embru'd;
Yet unatoned (a labor vaſt!
Doubtful the die, and dire the caſt!)
You treat adventurous, and incautious tread
On fires with faithleſs embers overſpread. FRANCIS.

harſh, and obſcure; owing to no other cauſe but this, that three diſtinct metaphors are crowded together, to deſcribe the difficulty of Pollio's writing a hiſtory of the civil wars. Firſt, "tractas arma uncta cruoribus nondum ex-"piatis;" next, "opus plenum periculoſæ aleæ;" and then; "incedis per ignes ſuppoſitos doloſo "cineri." The mind has difficulty in paſſing readily through ſo many different views given it, in quick ſucceſſion, of the ſame object.

The only other rule concerning metaphors which I ſhall add, in the ſeventh place, is, that they be not too far purſued. If the reſemblance, on which the figure is founded, be long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumſtances, we make an allegory inſtead of a metaphor; we tire the reader, who ſoon wearies of this play of fancy; and we render our diſcourſe obſcure. This is called, ſtraining a metaphor. Cowley deals in this to exceſs; and to this error is owing, in a great meaſure, that intricacy and harſhneſs, in his figurative language, which I before remarked. Lord Shaftſbury, is ſometimes guilty of purſuing his metaphors too far. Fond, to a high degree, of every decoration of ſtyle, when once he had hit upon a figure that pleaſed him, he was extremely loth to part with it. Thus, in his advice to an author, having taken up ſoliloquy, or meditation, under the metaphor of a proper method of evacuation for an author, he purſues this metaphor through ſeveral pages, under all the forms "of diſcharging crudities,

" throwing off froth and ſcum, bodily operation, " taking phyſic, curing indigeſtion, giving vent " to choler, bile, flatulencies, and tumors;" till at laſt, the idea becomes nauſeous. Dr. Young alſo often treſpaſſes in the ſame way. The merit, however, of this writer, in figurative language, is great, and deſerves to be remarked. No writer, ancient or modern, had a ſtronger imagination than Dr. Young, or one more fertile in figures of every kind. His metaphors are often new, and often natural and beautiful. But, as his imagination was ſtrong and rich; rather than delicate and correct, he ſometimes gives it too looſe reins. Hence, in his Night Thoughts, there prevails an obſcurity, and a hardneſs in his ſtyle. The metaphors are frequently too bold; and frequently too far purſued; the reader is dazzled rather than enlightened; and kept conſtantly on the ſtretch to comprehend, and keep pace with, the author. We may obſerve, for inſtance, how the following metaphor is ſpun out:

Thy thoughts are vagabonds; all outward bound,
Midſt ſands and rocks, and ſtorms to cruiſe for pleaſure,
If gained, dear bought; and better miſs'd than gain'd.
Fancy and ſenſe, from an infected ſhore,
Thy cargo brings; and peſtilence the prize;
Then ſuch the thirſt, inſatiable thirſt,
By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more,
Fancy ſtill cruiſes, when poor ſenſe is tired.

Speaking of old age, he ſays, it ſhould

Walk thoughtful on the ſilent ſolemn ſhore
Of that vaſt ocean, it muſt ſail ſo ſoon;
And put good works on board; and wait the wind
That ſhortly blows us into worlds unknown.

The two firſt lines are uncommonly beautiful; "walk thoughtful on the ſilent, &c." but when he continues the metaphor, to "putting good "works on board, and waiting the wind," it plainly becomes ſtrained, and ſinks in dignity. Of all the Engliſh authors, I know none ſo happy in his metaphors as Mr. Addiſon. His imagination was neither ſo rich nor ſo ſtrong as Dr. Young's; but far more chaſte and delicate. Perſpicuity, natural grace and eaſe, always diſtinguiſh his figures. They are neither harſh nor ſtrained; they never appear to have been ſtudied or ſought after; but ſeem to riſe of their own accord from the ſubject, and conſtantly embelliſh it.

I have now treated fully of the metaphor, and the rules that ſhould govern it, a part of the doctrine of ſtyle ſo important, that it required particular illuſtration. I have only to add a few words concerning allegory

An allegory may be regarded as a continued metaphor; as it is the repreſentation of ſome one thing by another that reſembles it, and that is made to ſtand for it. Thus in Prior's Henry and Emma, Emma in the following allegorical manner deſcribes her conſtancy to Henry:

Did I but purpoſe to embark with thee
On the ſmooth ſurface of a ſummer's ſea,
While gentle zephyrs play with proſperous gales,
And fortune's favor fills the ſwelling ſails;
But would forſake the ſhip, and make the ſhore,
When the winds whiſtle, and the tempeſts roar?

We may take alſo from the ſcriptures a very fine example of an allegory, in the 80th Pſalm; where the people of Iſrael are repreſented under the image of a vine, and the figure is ſupported throughout with great correctneſs and beauty; "Thou haſt brought a vine out of Egypt; thou "haſt caſt out the heathen, and planted it. Thou "preparedſt room before it, and didſt cauſe it "to take deep root, and it filled the land. The "hills were covered with the ſhadow of it; and "the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. "She ſent out her boughs into the ſea, and her "branches into the river. Why haſt thou broken "down her hedges, ſo that all they which paſs "by the way do pluck her? The boar out of "the wood doth waſte it; and the wild beaſts "of the field doth devour it. Return, we be-"ſeech thee, O God of hoſts, look down from "heaven, and behold, and viſit this vine!" Here there is no circumſtance (except perhaps one phraſe at the beginning, "thou haſt caſt out the "heathen,") that does not ſtrictly agree to a vine, whilſt, at the ſame time, the whole quadrates happily with the Jewiſh ſtate repreſented by this figure. This is the firſt and principal requiſite

in the conduct of an allegory, that the figurative and the literal meaning be not mixed inconſiſtently together. For inſtance, inſtead of deſcribing the vine, as waſted by the boar from the wood, and devoured by the wild beaſt of the field, had the pſalmiſt ſaid; it was afflicted by heathens, or overcome by enemies (which is the real meaning), this would have ruined the allegory, and produced the ſame confuſion, of which I gave examples in metaphors, when the figurative and literal ſenſe are mixed and jumbled together. Indeed, the ſame rules that were given for metaphors, may alſo be applied to allegories, on account of the affinity they bear to each other. The only material difference between them, beſides the one being ſhort, and the other being prolonged, is, that a metaphor always explains itſelf by the words that are connected with it in their proper and natural meaning; as when I ſay, "Achilles was a lion;" an "able miniſter is the pillar of the ſtate." My lion and my pillar are ſufficiently interpreted by the mention of Achilles and the miniſter, which I join to them; but an allegory is, or may be, allowed to ſtand more diſconnected with the literal meaning; the interpretation not ſo directly pointed out, but left to our own reflection.

Allegories were a favorite method of delivering inſtructions in ancient times; for what we call fables or parables are no other than allegories; where, by words and actions attributed to beaſts or inanimate objects, the diſpoſitions of men are figured;

and what we call the moral, is the unfigured ſenſe or meaning of the allegory. An enigma or riddle is alſo a ſpecies of allegory; one thing repreſented or imaged by another; but purpoſely wrapt up under ſo many circumſtances, as to be rendered obſcure. Where a riddle is not intended, it is always a fault in allegory to be too dark. The meaning ſhould be eaſily ſeen through the figure employed to ſhadow it. However the proper mixture of light and ſhade in ſuch compoſitions, the exact adjuſtment of all the figurative circumſtances with the literal ſenſe, ſo as neither to lay the meaning too bare and open, nor to cover and wrap it up too much, has ever been found an affair of great nicety; and there are few ſpecies of compoſition in which it is more difficult to write ſo as to pleaſe and command attention, than in allegories. In ſome of the viſions of the Spectator, we have examples of allegories very happily executed.

LECTURE XVI.

Hyperbole = Perſonification — Apoſtrophe.

THE next figure concerning which I am to treat, is called hyperbole, or exaggeration. It conſiſts in magnifying an object beyond its natural bounds. It may be conſidered ſometimes as a trope, and ſometimes as a figure of thought; and here indeed the diſtinction between theſe two claſſes begins not to be clear, nor is it of any importance that we ſhould have recourſe to metaphyſical ſubtilties, in order to keep them diſtinct. Whether we call it trope or figure, it is plain that it is a mode of ſpeech which hath ſome foundation in nature. For in all languages, even in common converſation, hyperbolical expreſſions very frequently occur; as ſwift as the wind; as white as the ſnow, and the like; and our common forms of compliment are almoſt all of them extravagant hyperboles. If any thing be remarkably good or great in its kind; we are inſtantly ready to add to it ſome exaggerating epithet; and to make it the greateſt or beſt we ever ſaw. The imagination has always

a tendency to gratify itſelf, by magnifying its preſent object, and carrying it to exceſs. More or leſs of this hyperbolical turn will prevail in language, according to the livelineſs of imagination among the people who ſpeak it. Hence young people deal always much in hyperboles. Hence the language of the Orientals was far more hyperbolical than that of the Europeans, who are of more phlegmatic, or, if you pleaſe, of more correct imagination. Hence, among all writers in early times, and in the rude periods of ſociety, we may expect this figure to abound. Greater experience, and more cultivated ſociety, abate the warmth of imagination, and chaſten the manner of expreſſion.

The exaggerated expreſſions to which our ears are accuſtomed in converſation, ſcarcely ſtrike us as hyperboles. In an inſtant we make the proper abatement, and underſtand them according to their juſt value. But when there is ſomething ſtriking and unuſual in the form of a hyperbolical expreſſion, it then riſes into a figure of ſpeech which draws our attention: and here it is neceſſary to obſerve, that unleſs the reader's imagination be in ſuch a ſtate as diſpoſes it to riſe and ſwell along with the hyperbolical expreſſion, he is always hurt and offended by it. For a ſort of diſagreeable force is put upon him; he is required to ſtrain and exert his fancy, when he feels no inclination to make any ſuch effort. Hence the hyperbole is a figure of difficult management; and ought neither to be frequently

uſed, nor long dwelt upon. On ſome occaſions, it is undoubtedly proper; being, as was before obſerved, the natural ſtyle of a ſprightly and heated imagination; but when hyperboles are unſeaſonable, or too frequent, they render a compoſition frigid and unaffecting. They are the reſource of an author of feeble imagination; of one, deſcribing objects which either want native dignity in themſelves; or whoſe dignity he cannot ſhow by deſcribing them ſimply, and in their juſt proportions, and is therefore obliged to reſt upon tumid and exaggerated expreſſions.

Hyperboles are of two kinds; either ſuch as are employed in deſcription, or ſuch as are ſuggeſted by the warmth of paſſion. The beſt by far, are thoſe which are the effect of paſſion; for if the imagination has a tendency to magnify its objects beyond their natural proportion, paſſion poſſeſſes this tendency in a vaſtly ſtronger degree; and therefore not only excuſes the moſt daring figures, but very often renders them natural and juſt. All paſſions, without exception, love, terror, amazement, indignation, anger, and even grief, throw the mind into confuſion, aggravate their objects, and of courſe prompt a hyperbolical ſtyle. Hence the following ſentiments of Satan in Milton, as ſtrongly as they are deſcribed, contain nothing but what is natural and proper; exhibiting the picture of a mind agitated with rage and deſpair:

Me miſerable! which way ſhall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite deſpair?

Which way I fly is hell, myſelf am hell;
And in the loweſt deep, a lower deep
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,
to which the hell I ſuffer ſeems a heaven.
B. iv. v. 73.

In ſimple deſcription, though hyperboles are not excluded, yet they muſt be uſed with more caution, and require more preparation, in order to make the mind reliſh them. Either the object deſcribed muſt be of that kind, which of itſelf ſeizes the fancy ſtrongly, and diſpoſes it to run beyond the bounds; ſomething vaſt, ſurpriſing, and new; or the writer's art muſt be exerted in heating the fancy gradually, and preparing it to think highly of the object which he intends to exaggerate. When a poet is deſcribing an earthquake or a ſtorm, or when he has brought us into the midſt of a battle, we can bear ſtrong hyperboles without diſpleaſure. But when he is deſcribing only a woman in grief, it is impoſſible not to be diſguſted with ſuch wild exaggeration as the following, in one of our dramatic poets:

——— I found her on the floor
In all the ſtorm of grief, yet beautiful;
Pouring forth tears at ſuch a laviſh rate,
That were the world on fire, they might have drown'd
The wrath of heaven, and quench'd the mighty ruin.
LEE.

This is mere bombaſt. The perſon herſelf who was under the diſtracting agitations of grief,

might be permitted to hyperbolize ſtrongly; but the ſpectator deſcribing her, cannot be allowed an equal liberty: for this plain reaſon, that the one is ſuppoſed to utter the ſentiments of paſſion, the other ſpeaks only the language of deſcription, which is always, according to the dictates of nature, on a lower tone: a diſtinction, which however obvious, has not been attended to by many writers.

How far a Hyperbole, ſuppoſing it properly introduced, may be ſafely carried without over-ſtretching it; what is the proper meaſure and boundary of this figure, cannot, as far as I know, be aſcertained by any preciſe rule. Good ſenſe and juſt taſte muſt determine the point, beyond which, if we paſs, we become extravagant. Lucan may be pointed out as an author apt to be exceſſive in his hyperboles. Among the compliments paid by the Roman poets to their Emperors, it had become faſhionable to aſk them, what part of the heavens they would chuſe for their habitation, after they ſhould have become Gods? Virgil had already carried this ſufficiently far in his addreſs to Auguſtus:

" ——— Tibi brachia contrahit ingens
" Scorpius, & Cœli juſta plus parte relinquit *. "
Georg. I.

* " The ſcorpion ready to receive thy laws,
" Yields half his region, and contracts his paws."
DRYDEN.

But this did not ſuffice Lucan. Reſolved to outdo all his predeceſſors, in a like addreſs to Nero, he very gravely beſeeches him not to chuſe his place near either of the poles, but to be ſure to occupy juſt the middle of the heavens, leſt, by going either to one ſide or other, his weight ſhould overſet the univerſe:

Sed neque in Arctoo ſedem tibi legeris orbe
Nec polus adverſi calidus qua mergitur auſtri;
Ætheris immenſi partem ſi preſſeris unam
Sentiet axis onus. Librati pondera Cœli
Orbe tene medio *. —— PHARS. I. 53.

Such thoughts as theſe, are what the French call *outrés*, and always proceed from a falſe fire of genius. The Spaniſh and African writers, as Tertullian, Cyprian, Auguſtin, are remarked for being fond of them. As in that epitaph on Charles V. by a Spaniſh writer:

Pro tumulo ponas orbem, pro tegmine cœlum,
Sidera pro facibus, pro lacrymis maria.

* But, oh! whatever be thy Godhead great,
Fix not in regions too remote thy ſeat;
Nor deign thou near the frozen bear to ſhine
Nor where the ſultry ſouthern ſtars decline.
Preſs not too much on any part the ſphere,
Hard were the task thy weight divine to bear;
Soon would the axis feel the unuſual load,
And, groaning, bend beneath th'incumbent God;
O'er the mid orb more equal ſhalt thou riſe,
And with a juſter balance fix the ſkies. ROWE.

Sometimes they dazzle and impoſe by their boldneſs; but wherever reaſon and good ſenſe are ſo much violated, there can be no true beauty. Epigrammatic writers are frequently guilty in this reſpect; reſting the whole merit of their epigrams on ſome extravagant hyperbolical turn; ſuch as the following of Dr. Pitcairn's, upon Holland's being gained from the ocean:

Tellurem fecere Dii; ſua littora Belgæ;
Immenſæque molis opus utrumque fuit;
Dii vacuo ſparſas glomerarunt æthere terras,
Nil ibi quod operi poſſit obeſſe fuit.
At Belgis, maria & cœli naturaque rerum
Obſtitit; obſtantes hi domuere Deos.

So much for the hyperbole. We proceed now to thoſe figures which lie altogether in the thought; where the words are taken in their common and literal ſenſe.

Among theſe, the firſt place is unqueſtionably due to perſonification, or that figure by which we attribute life and action to inanimate objects. The technical term for this is proſopopœia; but as perſonification is of the ſame import, and more allied to our own language, it will be better to uſe this word.

It is a figure, the uſe of which is very extenſive, and its foundation laid deep in human nature. At firſt view, and when conſidered abſtractly, it would appear to be a figure of the utmoſt boldneſs, and to border on the extravagant

and ridiculous. For what can ſeem more remote from the tract of reaſonable thought, than to ſpeak of ſtones and trees, and fields and rivers, as if they were living creatures, and to attribute to them thought and ſenſation, affections and actions? One might imagine this to be no more than childiſh conceit, which no perſon of taſte could reliſh. In fact, however, the caſe is very different. No ſuch ridiculous effect is produced by perſonification, when properly employed; on the contrary, it is found to be natural and agreeable; nor is any very uncommon degree of paſſion required, in order to make us reliſh it. All poetry, even in its moſt gentle and humble forms, abounds with it. From proſe, it is far from being excluded; nay, in common converſation, very frequent approaches are made to it. When we ſay, the ground *thirſts* for rain, or the earth *ſmiles* with plenty; when we ſpeak of ambition being *reſtleſs*, or a diſeaſe being *deceitful*, ſuch expreſſions ſhow the facility with which the mind can accommodate the properties of living creatures to things that are inanimate, or to abſtract conceptions of its own forming.

Indeed, it is very remarkable, that there is a wonderful proneneſs in human nature to animate all objects. Whether this ariſes from a ſort of aſſimilating principle, from a propenſion to ſpread a reſemblance of ourſelves over all other things, or from whatever other cauſe it ariſes, ſo it is, that almoſt every emotion, which in the leaſt agitates the mind, beſtows upon its object a

momentary idea of life. Let a man, by an unwary ſtep, ſprain his ankle, or hurt his foot upon a ſtone, and, in the ruffled diſcompoſed moment, he will, ſometimes, feel himſelf diſpoſed to break the ſtone in pieces, or to utter paſſionate expreſſions againſt it, as if it had done him an injury. If one has been long accuſtomed to a certain ſet of objects, which have made a ſtrong impreſſion on his imagination; as to a houſe, where he has paſſed many agreeable years; or to fields, and trees, and mountains, among which he has often walked with the greateſt delight; when he is obliged to part with them, eſpecially if he has no proſpect of ever ſeeing them again, he can ſcarce avoid having ſomewhat of the ſame feeling as when he is leaving old friends. They ſeem endowed with life. They become objects of his affection; and, in the moment of his parting, it ſcarce ſeems abſurd to him, to give vent to his feeling in words, and to take a formal adieu.

So ſtrong is that impreſſion of life which is made upon us, by the more magnificent and ſtriking objects of nature eſpecially; that I doubt not, in the leaſt, of this having been one cauſe of the multiplication of divinities in the Heathen world. Dryads and Naiads, the genius of the wood, and the God of the river, were, in men of lively imaginations, in the early ages of the world, eaſily grafted upon this turn of mind. When their favorite rural objects had often been animated in their fancy, it was an eaſy tranſition to attribute to them ſome real divinity, ſome unſeen

unſeen power or genius which inhabited them, or in ſome peculiar manner belonged to them. Imagination was highly gratified, by thus gaining ſomewhat to reſt upon with more ſtability; and when belief coincided ſo much with imagination, very ſlight cauſes would be ſufficient to eſtabliſh it.

From this deduction, may be eaſily ſeen how it comes to paſs, that perſonification makes ſo great a figure in all compoſitions, where imagination or paſſion have any concern. On innumerable occaſions, it is the very language of imagination and paſſion, and, therefore, deſerves to be attended to, and examined with peculiar care. There are three different degrees of this figure; which it is neceſſary to remark and diſtinguiſh, in order to determine the propriety of its uſe. The firſt is, when ſome of the properties or qualities of living creatures are aſcribed to inanimate objects, the ſecond, when thoſe inanimate objects are introduced as acting like ſuch as have life; and the third, when they are repreſented, either as ſpeaking to us, or as liſtening to what we ſay to them.

The firſt, and loweſt degree of this figure, conſiſts in aſcribing to inanimate objects ſome of the qualities of living creatures. Where this is done, as is moſt commonly the caſe, in a word, or two, and by way of an epithet added to the object, as, "a raging ſtorm, a deceitful diſeaſe, "a cruel diſaſter," &c. it raiſes the ſtyle ſo little, that the humbleſt diſcourſe will admit it without any force. This, indeed, is ſuch an obſcure

degree of perſonification, that one may doubt whether it deſerves the name, and might not be claſſed with ſimple metaphors, which eſcape in a manner unnoticed. Happily employed, however, it ſometimes adds beauty and ſprightlineſs to an expreſſion; as in this line of Virgil:

Aut conjurato deſcendens Dacus ab Iſtro.
Geor. II. 474.

Where the perſonal epithet, *conjurato*, applied to the river *Iſtro*, is infinitely more poetical than if it had been applied to the perſon, thus:

Aut conjuratus deſcendens Dacus ab Iſtro.

A very little taſte will make any one feel the difference between theſe two lines.

The next degree of this figure is, when we introduce inanimate objects acting like thoſe that have life. Here we riſe a ſtep higher, and the perſonification becomes ſenſible. According to the nature of the action, which we attribute to thoſe inanimate objects, and the particularity with which we deſcribe it, ſuch is the ſtrength of the figure. When purſued to any length, it belongs only to ſtudied harangues, to highly figured and eloquent diſcourſe; when ſlightly touched, it may be admitted into ſubjects of leſs elevation. Cicero, for inſtance, ſpeaking of the caſes where killing another is lawful in ſelf-defence, uſes the following words: "Aliquando nobis gladius ad occidendum "hominem ab ipſis porrigitur legibus." (Orat. pro Milone.) The expreſſion is happy. The laws are

perſonified, as reaching forth their hand to give us a ſword for putting one to death. Such ſhort perſonifications as theſe may be admitted, even into moral treatiſes, or works of cool reaſoning; and, provided they be eaſy and not ſtrained, and that we be not cloyed with too frequent returns of them, they have a good effect on ſtyle, and render it both ſtrong and lively.

The genius of our language gives us an advantage in the uſe of this figure. As, with us, no ſubſtantive nouns have gender, or are maſculine and feminine, except the proper names of male and female creatures; by giving a gender to any inanimate object, or abſtract idea, that is, in place of the pronoun *it*, uſing the perſonal pronouns, *he* or *ſhe*, we preſently raiſe the ſtyle, and begin perſonification. In ſolemn diſcourſe, this can often be done to good purpoſe, when ſpeaking of religion, or virtue, or our country, or any ſuch object of dignity. I ſhall give a remarkably fine example, from a ſermon of Biſhop Sherlock's, where we ſhall ſee natural religion beautifully perſonified, and be able to judge from it, of the ſpirit and grace which this figure, when well conducted, beſtows on a diſcourſe. I muſt take notice, at the ſame time, that it is an inſtance of this figure, carried as far as proſe, even in its higheſt elevation, will admit; and, therefore, ſuited only to compoſitions where the great efforts of eloquence are allowed. The author is comparing together our Saviour and Mahomet: "Go," ſays he, "to your natural religion; lay

Earth felt the wound, and nature from her ſeat,
Sighing through all her works, gave ſigns of woe,
That all was loſt.———— B. ix. 780.

All the circumſtances and ages of men, poverty, riches, youth, old age, all the diſpoſitions and paſſions, melancholy, love, grief, contentment, are capable of being perſonified in poetry, with great propriety. Of this, we meet with frequent examples in Milton's Allegro and Penſeroſo, Parnell's Hymn to Contentment, Thomſon's Seaſons, and all the good poets: nor, indeed, is it eaſy to ſet any bounds to perſonifications of this kind, in poetry.

One of the greateſt pleaſures we receive from poetry, is, to find ourſelves always in the midſt of our fellows, and to ſee every thing thinking, feeling, and acting, as we ourſelves do. This is, perhaps, the principal charm of this ſort of figured ſtyle, that it introduces us into ſociety with all nature, and intereſts us, even in inanimate objects, by forming a connexion between them and us, through that ſenſibility which it aſcribes to them. This is exemplified in the following beautiful paſſage of Thomſon's Summer, wherein the life which he beſtows upon all nature, when deſcribing the effects of the riſing ſun, renders the ſcenery uncommonly gay and intereſting:

But yonder comes the powerful king of day
Rejoicing in the eaſt. The leſſening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brim

Tipt with ethereal gold, his near approach
Betoken glad, ——————
——————● —— By thee refined,
In briſker meaſures, the reluctent ſtream
Friſks o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
Projecting horror on the blacken'd flood,
Softens at thy return. The deſert joys
Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds.
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
Seen from ſome pointed promontory's top,
Reflects from every fluctuating wave,
A glance extenſive as the day.——

The ſame effect is remarkable in that fine paſſage of Milton:

——————To the nuptial bower
I led her bluſhing like the morn: all heaven
And happy conſtellations on that hour
Shed their ſelecteſt influence; the earth
Gave ſigns of gratulation, and each hill;
Joyous the birds; freſh gales and gentle airs
Whiſpered it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung roſes, flung odors from the ſpicy ſhrub,
Diſporting, ——————
B. VIII. v. 510.

The third and higheſt degree of this figure remains to be mentioned; when inanimate objects are introduced, not only as feeling and acting, but as ſpeaking to us, or hearing and liſtening when we addreſs ourſelves to them. This, though

on ſeveral occaſions far from being unnatural is, however, more difficult in the execution, than the other kinds of perſonification. For this is plainly the boldeſt of all rhetorical figures; it is the ſtyle of a ſtrong paſſion only; and, therefore never to be attempted, unleſs when the mind is conſiderably heated and agitated. A ſlight perſonification of ſome inanimate thing, acting as if it had life, can be reliſhed by the mind, in the midſt of cool deſcription, and when its ideas are going on in the ordinary train. But it muſt be in a ſtate of violent emotion, and have departed conſiderably from its common tract of thought, before it can ſo far realize the perſonification of an inſenſible object, as to conceive it liſtening to what we ſay, or making any return to us. All ſtrong paſſions, however, have a tendency to uſe this figure; not only love, anger, and indignation, but even thoſe which are ſeemingly more diſpiriting, ſuch as, grief, remorſe, and melancholy. For all paſſions ſtruggle for vent, and if they can find no other object, will, rather than be ſilent, pour themſelves forth to woods, and rocks and the moſt inſenſible things; eſpecially, if theſe be any how connected with the cauſes and objects that have thrown the mind into this agitation. Hence, in poetry, where the greateſt liberty is allowed to the language of paſſion, it is eaſy to produce many beautiful examples of this figure. Milton affords us an extremely fine one, in that moving and tender addreſs which Eve makes to paradiſe, juſt before ſhe is compelled to leave it.

Oh! unexpected ſtroke, worſe than of death!
Muſt I thus leave thee, paradiſe? thus leave
Thee, native ſoil, theſe happy walks, and ſhades,
Fit haunt of Gods! where I had hope to ſpend
Quiet, though ſad, the reſpite of that day
That muſt be mortal to us both. O flowers!
That never will in other climate grow,
My early viſitation, and my laſt
At ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand
From the firſt opening bud, and gave you names!
Who now ſhall rear you to the ſun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambroſial fount?
B. XI. v. 268.

This is altogether the language of nature, and of female paſſion. It is obſervable, that all plaintive paſſions are peculiarly prone to the uſe of this figure. The complaints which Philoctetes, in Sophocles, pours out to the rocks and caves of Lemnos, amidſt the exceſs of his grief and deſpair, are remarkably fine examples of it *.

* Ὦ λίμενες, ὦ προβλῆτες, ὦ ξυνουσίαι
Θηρῶν ὀρείων, ὦ κταπρῴωγες πέτραι,
Ὑμῖν ταδ' ἤδη γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδ' ὁτῳ λέγω
Ἀνακλαίομαι παρούσι τοῖς εἰωθόσι, &c.

"O mountains, rivers, rocks, and ſavage herds,
"To you I ſpeak! to you alone, I now
"Muſt breathe my ſorrows? you are wont to hear
"My ſad complaints, and I will tell you all
"That I have ſuffered from Achilles' ſon!"
FRANKLIN.

And there are frequent examples, not in poetry only, but in real life, of perſons, when juſt about to ſuffer death, making a paſſionate farewel of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, or other ſenſible objects around them.

There are two great rules for the management of this ſort of perſonification. The firſt rule is, never to attempt it, unleſs when prompted by ſtrong paſſion, and never to continue it when the paſſion begins to flag. It is one of thoſe high ornaments, which can only find place in the moſt warm and ſpirited parts of compoſition; and there, too, muſt be employed with moderation.

The ſecond rule is never to perſonify any object in this way, but ſuch as has ſome dignity in itſelf, and can make a proper figure in this elevation to which we raiſe it. The obſervance of this rule is required, even in the lower degrees of perſonification; but ſtill more, when an addreſs is made to the perſonified object. To addreſs the corpſe of a deceaſed friend, is natural; but to addreſs the clothes which he wore, introduces mean and degrading ideas. So alſo, addreſſing the ſeveral parts of one's body, as if they were animated, is not congruous to the dignity of paſſion. For this reaſon, I muſt condemn the following paſſage, in a very beautiful poem of Mr. Pope's, Eloiſa to Abelard.

Dear fatal name! reſt ever unreveal'd,
Nor paſs theſe lips in holy ſilence ſealed.

Hide it, my heart, within that cloſe diſguiſe,
Where, mixed with Gods, his lov'd idea lies:
Oh! write it not, my hand! — his name appears
Already written — Blot it out, my tears!

Here are ſeveral different objects and parts of the body perſonified; and each of them are addreſſed or ſpoken to; let us conſider with what propriety. The firſt is, the name of Abelard: "Dear fatal name! reſt ever," &c. To this, no reaſonable objection can be made. For, as the name of a perſon often ſtands for the perſon himſelf, and ſuggeſts the ſame ideas, it can bear this perſonification with ſufficient dignity. Next, Eloiſa ſpeaks to herſelf; and perſonifies her heart for this purpoſe: "Hide it, my heart, within that cloſe," &c. As the heart is a dignified part of the human frame, and is often put for the mind, or affections, this alſo may paſs without blame. But, when from her heart ſhe paſſes to her hand, and tells her hand not to write his name, this is forced and unnatural; a perſonified hand is low, and not in the ſtyle of true paſſion: and the figure becomes ſtill worſe, when, in the laſt place, ſhe exhorts her tears to blot out what her hand had written: "Oh! "write it not," &c. There is, in theſe two lines, an air of epigrammatic conceit, which native paſſion never ſuggeſts; and which is altogether unſuitable to the tenderneſs which breathes through the reſt of that excellent poem.

In proſe compoſitions, this figure requires to be uſed with ſtill greater moderation and

delicacy. The ſame liberty is not allowed to the imagination there, as in poetry. The ſame aſſiſtances cannot be obtained for raiſing paſſion to its proper height by the force of numbers, and the glow of ſtyle. However, addreſſes to inanimate objects are not excluded from proſe; but have their place only in the higher ſpecies of oratory. A public ſpeaker may on ſome occaſions very properly addreſs religion or virtue; or his native country, or ſome city or province, which has ſuffered perhaps great calamities, or been the ſcene of ſome memorable action. But we muſt remember, that, as ſuch addreſſes are among the higheſt efforts of eloquence, they ſhould never be attempted, unleſs by perſons of more than ordinary genius. For if the orator fails in his deſign of moving our paſſions by them, he is ſure of being laughed at. Of all frigid things, the moſt frigid are, the awkward and unſeaſonable attempts ſometimes made towards ſuch kinds of perſonification, eſpecially if they be long continued. We ſee the writer or ſpeaker toiling and laboring, to expreſs the language of ſome paſſion, which he neither feels himſelf, nor can make us feel. We remain not only cold, but frozen; and are at full leiſure to criticize on the ridiculous figure which the perſonified object makes, when we ought to have been tranſported with a glow of enthuſiaſm. Some of the French writers, particularly Boſſuet and Fléchier, in their ſermons and funeral orations, have attempted and executed this figure, not without warmth and dignity. Their works are

exceedingly worthy of being conſulted, for inſtances of this, and of ſeveral other ornaments of ſtyle. Indeed the vivacity and ardor of the French genius is more ſuited to this animated kind of oratory, than the more correct but more phlegmatic genius of the Britiſh, who in their proſe-works very rarely attempt any of the high figures of eloquence *. So much for perſonifications or proſopopœia, in all its different forms.

* In the "Oraiſons funèbres de M. Boſſuet," which I conſider as one of the maſter-pieces of modern eloquence, apoſtrophes and addreſſes, to perſonified objects, frequently occur, and are ſupported with much ſpirit. Thus, for inſtance, in the funeral oration of Mary of Auſtria, Queen of France, the author addreſſes Algiers, in the proſpect of the advantage which the arms of Louis XIV. were to gain over it: "Avant lui la "France, preſque ſans vaiſſeaux, tenait en vain aux deux "mers. Maintenant, on les voit couvertes depuis le Levant "juſqu'au couchant de nos flottes victorieuſes; & la hardieſſe "Françaiſe porte par-tout la terreur avec le nom de Louis. "Tu céderas, tu tomberas ſous ce vainqueur, Alger! riche "des dépouilles de la Chrétienté. Tu diſois en ton cœur "avare, je tiens la mer ſous ma loi, & les nations ſont "ma proie. La légèreté de tes vaiſſeaux te donnait de la "confiance. Mais tu te verras attaqué dans tes murailles, "comme un oiſeau raviſſant qu'on irait chercher parmi ſes "rochers, & dans ſon nid, où il partage ſon butin à ſes "petits. Tu rends déjà tes eſclaves. Louis a briſé les fers, "dont tu accablais ſes ſujets, &c." In another paſſage of the ſame oration, he thus apoſtrophizes the Iſle of Pheaſants, which had been rendered famous by being the ſcene of thoſe conferences, in which the treaty of the Pyrénées between France and Spain, and the marriage of this Princeſs with the King of France, were concluded. "Iſle pacifique où ſe doivent

Apoſtrophe is a figure ſo much of the ſame kind, that it will not require many words. It is an addreſs to a real perſon; but one who is either abſent or dead, as if he were preſent, and liſtening to us. It is ſo much allied to an addreſs to inanimate objects perſonified, that both theſe figures are ſometimes called apoſtrophes. However, the proper apoſtrophe is in boldneſs one degree lower than the addreſs to perſonified objects; for it certainly requires a leſs effort of imagination to ſuppoſe perſons preſent who are dead or abſent, than to animate inſenſible beings, and direct our diſcourſe to them. Both figures are ſubject to the

" terminer les différends de deux grands empires à qui tu " ſers de limites: isle éternellement mémorable par les con- " férences de deux grands miniſtres! — Auguſte journée où " deux fières nations, long-tems ennemies, & alors reconci- " liées par Marie Thérese, s'avancent ſur leurs confins, leurs " rois à leur tête, non plus pour ſe combattre, mais pour " s'embraſſer. — " Fêtes ſacrées, mariage fortuné, voile " nuptial, bénédiction, ſacrifice, puis-je mêler aujourd'hui vos " cérémonies, & vos pompes, avec ces pompes funèbres, & le " comble des grandeurs avec leurs ruines! " In the funeral oration of Henrietta, Queen of England (which is perhaps the nobleſt of all his compoſitions), after recounting all she had done to ſupport her unfortunate husband, he concludes with this beautiful apoſtrophe: " O mère! O femme! O reine admi- " rable & digne d'une meilleure fortune, ſi les fortunes de la " terre étaient quelque choſe! Enfin il faut céder à votre ſort. " Vous avez aſſez ſoutenu l'état, qui eſt attaqué, par une force " invincible & divine. Il ne reſte plus déſormais, ſi non que " vous teniez ferme parmi ſes ruines. "

ſame rule of being prompted by paſſion, in order to render them natural; for both are the language of paſſion or ſtrong emotions only. Among the poets apoſtrophe is frequent; as in Virgil:

——— Pereunt Hypaniſque Dymaſque
Confixi a ſociis; nec te, tua plurima, Pantheu
Labentem pietas, nec Apollinis infula texit*!

The poems of Oſſian are full of the moſt beautiful inſtances of this figure: "Weep on the rocks "of roaring winds. O maid of Iniſtore; bend thy "fair head over the waves, thou fairer than the "ghoſt of the hills, when it moves in a ſunbeam "at noon over the ſilence of Morven! He is "fallen! Thy youth is low; pale beneath the "ſword of Cuchullin!*" Quinctilian affords us a very fine example in proſe; when in the beginning of his ſixth book, deploring the untimely death of his ſon, which had happened during the courſe of the work, he makes a very moving and tender apoſtrophe to him. "Nam quo ille animo, "qua medicorum admiratione, menſium octo "valetudinem tulit? ut me in ſupremis conſolatus "eſt? quam etiam jam deficiens, jamque non "noſter, ipſum illum alienatæ mentis errorem "circa ſolas literas habuit? Tuoſne ergo, O meæ "ſpes inanes! labentes oculos, tuum fugientem

* Nor Pantheus! thee, thy mitre, nor the bands
Of awful Phœbus ſav'd from impious hands. DRYDEN.
Fingal. B. I.

" ſpiritum vidi? Tuum corpus frigidum, exangue
" complexus, animam recipere, auramque com-
" munem hauſire amplius potui? Tene, conſulari
" nuper adoptione ad omnium ſpes honorum
" patris admotum, te, avunculo prætori generum
" deſtinatum; te, omnium ſpe Atticæ eloquentiæ
" candidatum, parens ſuperſtes tantum ad pœnas
" amiſi *". In this paſſage, Quinctilian ſhows the true genius of an orator, as much as he does elſewhere that of the critic.

For ſuch bold figures of diſcourſe as ſtrong perſonifications, addreſſes to perſonified objects, and apoſtrophes, the glowing imagination of the ancient Oriental nations was particularly fitted. Hence, in the ſacred ſcriptures, we find ſome very remarkable

* " With what ſpirit, and how much to the admiration of
" the phyſicians did he bear throughout eight months his
" lingering diſtreſs? With what tender attention did he ſtudy,
" even in the laſt extremity, to comfort me? And, when no
" longer himſelf, how affecting was it to behold the diſordered
" efforts of his wandering mind, wholly employed on ſubjects
" of literature? Ah! my fruſtrated and fallen hopes! Have I
" then beheld your cloſing eyes, and heard the laſt groan
" iſſue from your lips? After having embraced your cold and
" breathleſs body, how was it in my power to draw the
" vital air, or continue to drag a miſerable life? When I
" had juſt beheld you raiſed by conſular adoption to the
" proſpect of all your father's honors, deſtined to be ſon-
" in-law to your uncle the prætor, pointed out by general
" expectation as the ſucceſsful candidate for the prize of Attic
" eloquence, in this moment of your opening honors, muſt
" I loſe you for ever, and remain an unhappy parent, ſur-
" viving only to ſuffer woe? "

remarkable inſtances: "O thou ſword of the Lord! "how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put "thyſelf up into thy ſcabbard, reſt and be ſtill! "How can it be quiet, ſeeing the Lord hath "given it a charge againſt Aſhkelon, and againſt "the ſea-ſhore? there hath he appointed it. *" There is one paſſage in particular, which I muſt not omit to mention, becauſe it contains a greater aſſemblage of ſublime ideas, of bold and daring figures, than is perhaps any where to be met with. It is in the fourteenth chapter of Iſaiah, where the prophet thus deſcribes the fall of the Aſſyrian empire: "Thou ſhalt take up this proverb againſt "the king of Babylon, and ſay, how hath the "oppreſſor ceaſed! the golden city ceaſed! The "Lord hath broken the ſtaff of the wicked, and "the ſceptre of the rulers. He who ſmote the "people in wrath with a continual ſtroke: he "that ruled the nations in anger, is perſecuted, "and none hindereth. The whole earth is at reſt, "and is quiet: they break forth into ſinging. "Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars "of Lebanon, ſaying, ſince thou art laid down, "no feller is come up againſt us. Hell from be-"neath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy "coming: it ſtirreth up the dead for thee, even "all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raiſed "up from their thrones all the kings of the na-"tions. All they ſhall ſpeak, and ſay unto thee, "art thou alſo become weak as we? art thou be-"come like unto us? Thy pomp is brought

* Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.

"down to the grave, and the noiſe of thy viols:
"the worm is ſpread under thee, and the worms
"cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven,
"O Lucifer, ſon of the morning! how art thou
"cut down to the ground, which didſt weaken
"the nations! For thou haſt ſaid in thine heart,
"I will aſcend into heaven, I will exalt my throne
"above the ſtars of God: I will ſit alſo upon
"the mount of the congregation, in the ſides
"of the north. I will aſcend above the heights
"of the clouds, I will be like the moſt high.
"Yet thou ſhalt be brought down to hell, to
"the ſides of the pit. They that ſee thee ſhall
"narrowly look upon thee, and conſider thee,
"ſaying: Is this the man that made the earth to
"tremble, that did ſhake kingdoms? That made
"the world as a wilderneſs, and deſtroyed the
"cities thereof? that opened not the houſe of
"his priſoners? All the kings of the nations,
"even all of them lie in glory, every one in his
"own houſe. But thou art caſt out of thy grave,
"like an abominable branch: and as the raiment
"of thoſe that are ſlain, thruſt through with a
"ſword, that go down to the ſtones of the pit,
"as a carcaſe trodden under feet." This whole paſſage is full of ſublimity. Every object is animated; a variety of perſonages are introduced: we hear the Jews, the fir-trees, and cedars of Lebanon, the ghoſts of departed kings, the king of Babylon himſelf, and thoſe who look upon his body, all ſpeaking in their order, and acting their different parts without confuſion.

LECTURE XVII.

Compariſon; Antitheſis, Interrogation, Exclamation, and other Figures of Speech.

WE are ſtill engaged in the conſideration of figures of ſpeech; which, as they add much to the beauty of ſtyle when properly employed, and are at the ſame time liable to be greatly abuſed, require a careful diſcuſſion. As it would be tedious to dwell on all the variety of figurative expreſſions which rhetoricians have enumerated, I choſe to ſelect the capital figures, ſuch as occur moſt frequently, and to make my remarks on theſe; the principles and rules laid down concerning them, will ſufficiently direct as to the uſe of the reſt, either in proſe or poetry. Of metaphor, which is the moſt common of them all, I treated fully; and in the laſt lecture I diſcourſed of hyperbole, perſonification, and apoſtrophe. This lecture will nearly finiſh what remains on the head of figures.

Compariſon, or ſimile, is what I am to treat of firſt: a figure frequently employed both by poets and proſe writers, for the ornament of

compoſition. In a former lecture, I explained fully the difference betwixt this and metaphor. A metaphor is a compariſon implied, but not expreſſed as ſuch; as when I ſay, "Achilles is a lion," meaning, that he reſembles one in courage or ſtrength. A compariſon is, when the reſemblance between two objects is expreſſed in form, and generally purſued more fully than the nature of a metaphor admits; as when I ſay, "The actions of princes are like "thoſe great rivers, the courſe of which every "one beholds, but their ſprings have been ſeen "by few." This ſlight inſtance will ſhow, that a happy compariſon is a kind of ſparkling ornament, which adds not a little luſtre and beauty to diſcourſe; and hence ſuch figures are termed by Cicero, "orationis lumina."

The pleaſure we take in compariſons is juſt and natural. We may remark three different ſources whence it ariſes. Firſt, from the pleaſure which nature has annexed to that act of the mind by which we compare any two objects together, trace reſemblances among thoſe that are different, and differences among thoſe that reſemble each other; a pleaſure, the final cauſe of which is, to prompt us to remark and obſerve, and thereby to make us advance in uſeful knowledge. This operation of the mind is naturally and univerſally agreeable; as appears from the delight which even children have in comparing things together, as ſoon as they are capable of attending to the objects that ſurround them. Secondly, the pleaſure of compariſon ariſes from the illuſtration which the ſimile

employed gives to the principal object, from the clearer view of it which it preſents; or the more ſtrong impreſſion of it which it ſtamps upon the mind: and, thirdly, it ariſes from the introduction of a new, and commonly a ſplendid object, aſſociated to the principal one of which we treat; and from the agreeable picture which that object preſents to the fancy; new ſcenes being thereby brought into view, which, without the aſſiſtance of this figure, we could not have enjoyed.

All compariſons whatever may be reduced under two heads, *explaining* and *embelliſhing* compariſons. For when a writer likens the object of which he treats to any other thing, it always is, or at leaſt always ſhould be, with a view either to make us underſtand that object more diſtinctly, or to dreſs it up, and adorn it. All manner of ſubjects admit of explaining compariſons. Let an author be reaſoning ever ſo ſtrictly, or treating the moſt abſtruſe point in philoſophy, he may very properly introduce a compariſon, merely with a view to make his ſubject be better underſtood. Of this nature, is the following in Mr. Harris's Hermes, employed to explain a very abſtract point, the diſtinction between the powers of ſenſe and imagination in the human mind. "As wax," ſays he, "would not be adequate to the purpoſe of "ſignatures, if it had not the power to retain as "well as to receive the impreſſion, the ſame "holds of the ſoul with reſpect to ſenſe and ima-"gination. Senſe is its receptive power; ima-"gination its retentive. Had it ſenſe without

" imagination, it would not be as wax, but as " water, where, though all impreſſions be inſtantly " made, yet as ſoon as they are made, they are " inſtantly loſt." In compariſons of this nature, the underſtanding is concerned much more than the fancy: and therefore the only rules to be obſerved, with reſpect to them, are, that they be clear, and that they be uſeful; that they tend to render our conception of the principal object more diſtinct; and that they do not lead our view aſide, and bewilder it with any falſe light.

But embelliſhing compariſons, introduced not ſo much with a view to inform and inſtruct, as to adorn the ſubject of which we treat, are thoſe with which we are chiefly concerned at preſent, as figures of ſpeech; and thoſe, indeed which moſt frequently occur. Reſemblance, as I before mentioned, is the foundation of this figure. We muſt not, however, take reſemblance, in too ſtrict a ſenſe, for actual ſimilitude or likeneſs of appearance. Two objects may ſometimes be very happily compared to one another, though they reſemble each other, ſtrictly ſpeaking, in nothing; only, becauſe they agree in the effects which they produce upon the mind; becauſe they raiſe a train of ſimilar, or, what may be called, concordant ideas; ſo that the remembrance of the one, when recalled, ſerves to ſtrengthen the impreſſion made by the other. For example, to deſcribe the nature of ſoft and melancholy muſic, Oſſian ſays, " the " muſic of Carryl was, like the memory of joys " that are paſt, pleaſant and mournful to the ſoul."

This is happy and delicate. Yet, ſurely, no kind of muſic has any reſemblance to a feeling of the mind, ſuch as the memory of paſt joys. Had it been compared to the voice of the nightingale, or the murmur of the ſtream, as it would have been by ſome ordinary poet, the likeneſs would have been more ſtrict; but, by founding this ſimile upon the effect which Carryl's muſic produced, the poet, while he conveys a very tender image, gives us, at the ſame time, a much ſtronger impreſſion of the nature and ſtrain of that muſic: "Like the memory of joys that are paſt, pleaſant "and mournful to the ſoul."

In general, whether compariſons be founded on the ſimilitude of the two objects compared, or on ſome analogy and agreement in their effects, the fundamental requiſite of a compariſon is, that it ſhall ſerve to illuſtrate the object, for the ſake of which it is introduced, and to give us a ſtronger conception of it. Some little excurſions of fancy may be permitted, in purſuing the ſimile; but they muſt never deviate far from the principal object. If it be a great and noble one, every circumſtance in the compariſon muſt tend to aggrandize it, if it be a beautiful one, to render it more amiable; if terrible, to fill us with more awe. But to be a little more particular: The rules to be given concerning compariſons, reſpect chiefly two articles; the propriety of their introduction, and the nature of the objects whence they are taken.

First, the propriety of their introduction. From what has been already ſaid of compariſons, it appears, that they are not, like the figures of which I treated in the laſt lecture, the language of ſtrong paſſion. No; they are the language of imagination rather than of paſſion; of an imagination ſprightly, indeed, and warmed; but undiſturbed by any violent or agitating emotion. Strong paſſion is too ſevere to admit this play of fancy. It has no leiſure to caſt about for reſembling objects; it dwells on that object which has ſeized and taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul. It is too much occupied and filled by it, to turn its view aſide, or to fix its attention on any other thing. An author, therefore, can ſcarcely commit a greater fault, than, in the midſt of paſſion, to introduce a ſimile. Metaphorical expreſſion may be allowable in ſuch a ſituation; though even this may be carried too far: but the pomp and ſolemnity of a formal compariſon is altogether a ſtranger to paſſion. It changes the key in a moment; relaxes and brings down the mind; and ſhows us a writer perfectly at his eaſe, while he is perſonating ſome other, who is ſuppoſed to be under the torment of agitation. Our writers of tragedies are very apt to err here. In ſome of Mr. Rowe's plays, theſe flowers of ſimiles have been ſtrewed unſeaſonably. Mr. Addiſon's Cato, too, is juſtly cenſurable in this reſpect; as, when Portius, juſt after Lucia had bid him farewel for ever, and when he ſhould naturally

have been repreſented as in the moſt violent anguiſh, makes his reply in a ſtudied and affected compariſon:

> Thus o'er the dying lamp th' unſteady flame
> Hangs quiv'ring on a point, leaps off by fits,
> And falls again, as loth to quit its hold.
> Thou muſt not go; my ſoul ſtill hovers o'er thee,
> And can't get looſe.

Every one muſt be ſenſible, that this is quite remote from the language of nature on ſuch occaſions.

However, as compariſon is not the ſtyle of ſtrong paſſion, ſo neither, when employed for embelliſhment, is it the language of a mind wholly unmoved. It is a figure of dignity, and always requires ſome elevation in the ſubject, in order to make it proper: for it ſuppoſes the imagination to be uncommonly enlivened, though the heart be not agitated by paſſion. In a word, the proper place of compariſons lies in the middle region, between the highly pathetic, and the very humble ſtyle. This is a wide field, and gives ample range to the figure. But even this field we muſt take care not to overſtock with it. For, as was before ſaid, it is a ſparkling ornament; and all things that ſparkle, dazzle and fatigue, if they recur too often. Similes ſhould, even in poetry, be uſed with moderation; but, in proſe writings, much more: otherwiſe, the

ſtyle will become diſguſtingly luſcious, and the ornament loſe its virtue and effect.

I proceed, next, to the rules that relate to objects, whence compariſons ſhould be drawn; ſuppoſing them introduced in their proper place.

In the firſt place, they muſt not be drawn from things, which have too near and obvious a reſemblance to the object with which we compare them. The great pleaſure of the act of comparing lies, in diſcovering likeneſſes among things of different ſpecies, where we would not, at the firſt glance, expect a reſemblance. There is little art or ingenuity in pointing out the reſemblance of two objects, that are ſo much a-kin, or lie ſo near to one another in nature, that every one ſees they muſt be like. When Milton compares Satan's appearance, after his fall, to that of the ſun ſuffering an eclipſe, and affrighting the nations with portentous darkneſs, we are ſtruck with the happineſs and the dignity of the ſimilitude. But, when he compares Eve's bower in paradiſe, to the arbour of Pomona, or Eve herſelf, to a Dryad, or wood-nymph; we receive little entertainment: as every one ſees, that one arbour muſt, of courſe, in ſeveral reſpects, reſemble another arbour, and one beautiful woman another beautiful woman.

Among ſimiles, faulty through too great obviouſneſs of the likeneſs, we muſt likewiſe rank thoſe which are taken from objects become trite and familiar in poetical language. Such are the ſimiles of a hero to a lion, of a perſon

in ſorrow to a flower drooping its head, of violent paſſion to a tempeſt, of chaſtity to ſnow, of virtue to the ſun or the ſtars, and many more of this kind, with which we are ſure to find modern writers, of ſecond rate genius, abounding plentifully; handed down from every writer of verſes to another, as by hereditary right. Theſe compariſons were, at firſt, perhaps, very proper for the purpoſes to which they are applied. In the ancient original poets, who took them directly from nature, not from their predeceſſors, they had beauty. But they are now beaten; our ears are ſo accuſtomed to them, that they give no amuſement to the fancy. There is, indeed, no mark by which we can more readily diſtinguiſh a poet of true genius, from one of a barren imagination, than by the ſtrain of their compariſons. All who call themſelves poets affect them: but, whereas a mere verſifier copies no new image from nature, which appears, to his uninventive genius, exhauſted by thoſe who have gone before him, and, therefore, contents himſelf with humbly following their tract; to an author of real fancy, nature ſeems to unlock, ſpontaneouſly, her hidden ſtores; and the eye "quick "glancing from earth to heaven," diſcovers new ſhapes and forms, new likeneſſes between objects unobſerved before, which render his ſimiles original, expreſſive, and lively.

But, in the ſecond place, as compariſons ought not to be founded on likeneſſes too obvious, ſtill leſs ought they to be founded on thoſe which

are too faint and remote. For theſe, in place of aſſiſting, ſtrain the fancy to comprehend them, and throw no light upon the ſubject. It is alſo to be obſerved, that a compariſon which, in the principal circumſtances, carries a ſufficiently near reſemblance, may become unnatural and obſcure, if puſhed too far. Nothing is more oppoſite to the deſign of this figure, than to hunt after a great number of coincidences in minute points, merely to ſhow how far the poet's wit can ſtretch the reſemblance. This is Mr. Cowley's common fault; whoſe compariſons generally run out ſo far, as to become rather a ſtudied exerciſe of wit, than an illuſtration of the principal object. We need only open his works, his odes eſpecially, to find inſtances every where.

In the third place, the object from which a compariſon is drawn, ſhould never be an unknown object, or one of which few people can form clear ideas: "Ad inferendam rebus lucem," ſays Quinctilian, "repertæ ſunt ſimilitudines. "Præcipue, igitur, eſt cuſtodiendum ne id quod "ſimilitudinis gratia aſcivimus, aut obſcurum ſit, "aut ignotum. Debet enim id quod illuſtrandæ "alterius rei gratia aſſumitur, ipſum eſſe clarius eo "quod illuminatur *." Compariſons, therefore, founded on philoſophical diſcoveries, or on any

* "Compariſons have been introduced into diſcourſe, for the "ſake of throwing light on the ſubject. We muſt, therefore, "be much on our guard, not to employ, as the ground "of our ſimile, any object which is either obſcure or unknown.

thing with which perſons of a certain trade only, or a certain profeſſion, are converſant, attain not their proper effect. They ſhould be taken from thoſe illuſtrious, noted objects, which moſt of the readers either have ſeen, or can ſtrongly conceive. This leads me to remark a fault of which modern poets are very apt to be guilty. The ancients took their ſimiles from that face of nature, and that claſs of objects, with which they and their readers were acquainted. Hence lions, and wolves, and ſerpents, were fruitful, and very proper ſources of ſimiles amongſt them; and theſe having become a ſort of conſecrated, claſſical images, are very commonly adopted by the moderns; injudiciouſly however, for the propriety of them is now in a great meaſure loſt. It is only at ſecond hand, and by deſcription, that we are acquainted with many of thoſe objects; and, to moſt readers of poetry, it were more to the purpoſe, to deſcribe lions, or ſerpents, by ſimiles taken from men, than to deſcribe men by lions. Now-a-days, we can much eaſier form the conception of a fierce combat between two men, than between a bull and a tiger. Every country has a ſcenery peculiar to itſelf; and the imagery of every good poet will exhibit it. The introduction of unknown objects, or of a foreign ſcenery, betrays a

"That, ſurely, which is uſed for the purpoſe of illuſtrating "ſome other thing, ought to be more obvious and plain, than "the thing intended to be illuſtrated."

poet copying, not after nature, but from other writers. I have only to obſerve further.

In the fourth place, that, in compoſitions of a ſerious or elevated kind, ſimiles ſhould never be taken from low or mean objects. Theſe are degrading; whereas ſimiles are commonly intended to embelliſh, and to dignify: and, therefore, unleſs in burleſque writings, or where ſimiles are introduced purpoſely to vilify and diminiſh an object, mean ideas ſhould never be preſented to us. Some of Homer's compariſons have been taxed without reaſon, on this account. For it is to be remembered, that the meanneſs or dignity of objects, depends, in a great degree, on the ideas and manners of the age wherein we live. Many ſimiles, therefore, drawn from the incidents of rural life, which appear low to us, had abundance of dignity in thoſe ſimpler ages of antiquity.

I have now conſidered ſuch of the figures of ſpeech as ſeemed moſt to merit a full and particular diſcuſſion: metaphor, hyperbole, perſonification, apoſtrophe, and compariſon. A few more yet remain to be mentioned: the proper uſe and conduct of which will be eaſily underſtood from the principles already laid down.

As compariſon is founded on the reſemblance, ſo antitheſis on the contraſt or oppoſition of two objects. Contraſt has always this effect, to make each of the contraſted objects appear in the ſtronger light. White, for inſtance, never appears ſo bright as when it is oppoſed to black; and

when both are viewed together. Antitheſis, therefore, may, on many occaſions, be employed to advantage, in order to ſtrengthen the impreſſion which we intend that any object ſhould make. Thus Cicero, in his oration for Milo, repreſenting the improbability of Milo's forming a deſign to take away the life of Clodius, at a time when all circumſtances were unfavorable to ſuch a deſign, and after he had let other opportunities ſlip when he could have executed the ſame deſign, if he had formed it, with much more eaſe and ſafety, heightens our conviction of this improbability by a ſkilful uſe of this figure: "Quem igitur cum omnium gratia interficere "noluit, hunc voluit cum aliquorum querela? "Quem jure, quem loco, quem tempore, quem "impune, non eſt auſus, hunc injuria, iniquo "loco, alieno tempore, periculo capitis, non "dubitavit occidere *?" In order to render an antitheſis more complete, it is always of advantage, that the words and members of the ſentence, expreſſing the contraſted objects, be, as in this inſtance of Cicero's, ſimilarly conſtructed, and made to correſpond to each other. This

* "Is it credible that, when he declined putting Clodius "to death with the conſent of all, he would chuſe to do it "with the diſapprobation of many? Can you believe that the "perſon whom he ſcrupled to ſlay, when he might have done "ſo with full juſtice, in a convenient place, at a proper "time, with ſecure impunity, he made no ſcruple to murder "againſt juſtice, in an unfavorable place, at an unſeaſonable "time, and at the riſque of capital condemnation?"

leads us to remark the contraſt more, by ſetting the things which we oppoſe more clearly over againſt each other; in the ſame manner as when we contraſt a black and a white object, in order to perceive the full difference of their color, we would chuſe to have both objects of the ſame bulk, and placed in the ſame light. Their reſemblance to each other, in certain circumſtances, makes their diſagreement in others more palpable.

At the ſame time, I muſt obſerve, that the frequent uſe of antitheſis, eſpecially, where the oppoſition in the words is nice and quaint, is apt to render ſtyle diſagreeable. Such a ſentence as the following, from Seneca, does very well, where it ſtands alone: "Si quem volueris eſſe "divitem, non eſt quod augeas divitias, ſed "minuas cupiditates *." Or this: "Si ad na-"turam vives, nunquam eris pauper; ſi ad opi-"nionem, nunquam dives †." A maxim, or moral ſaying, properly enough receives this form; both becauſe it is ſuppoſed to be the fruit of meditation, and becauſe it is deſigned to be engraven on the memory, which recalls it more eaſily by the help of ſuch contraſted expreſſions. But where a ſtring of ſuch ſentences ſucceed each other

* "If you ſeek to make one rich, ſtudy not to increaſe "his ſtores, but to diminish his deſires."

† "If you regulate your deſires according to the ſtandard of "nature, you will never be poor; if according to the ſtandard of opinion, you will never be rich."

other; where this becomes an author's favorite and prevailing manner of expreſſing himſelf, his ſtyle is faulty; and it is upon this account Seneca has been often, and juſtly, cenſured. Such a ſtyle appears too ſtudied and labored; it gives us the impreſſion of an author attending more to his manner of ſaying things, than to the things themſelves which he ſays. Dr. Young, though a writer of real genius, was too fond of antitheſes. In his Eſtimate of Human Life, we find whole pages that run in ſuch a ſtrain as this: "The peaſant complains aloud; the courtier "in ſecret repines. In want, what diſtreſs? in "affluence, what ſatiety? The great are under "as much difficulty to expend with pleaſure, as "the mean to labor with ſucceſs. The ignorant, "through ill-grounded hope, are diſappointed; "the knowing, through knowledge, deſpond. "Ignorance occaſions miſtake; miſtake, diſappoint-"ment; and diſappointment is miſery. Knowledge, "on the other hand, gives true judgment; and "true judgment of human things, gives a de-"monſtration of their inſufficiency to our peace." There is too much glitter in ſuch a ſtyle as this to pleaſe long. We are fatigued, by attending to ſuch quaint and artificial ſentences often repeated.

There is another ſort of antitheſis, the beauty of which conſiſts, in ſurpriſing us by the unexpected contraſts of things which it brings together. Much wit may be ſhown in this; but it belongs wholly to pieces of profeſſed wit and humor,

and can find no place in grave compoſitions. Mr. Pope, who is remarkably fond of antitheſis, is often happy in this uſe of the figure. So, in his Rape of the Lock:

> Whether the nymph ſhall break Diana's law,
> Or ſome frail china jar receive a flaw;
> Or ſtain her honor, or her new brocade;
> Forget her prayers, or miſs a maſquerade;
> Or loſe her heart, or necklace, at a ball,
> Or whether heaven has doomed that Shock muſt fall.

What is called the point of an epigram, conſiſts, for moſt part, in ſome antitheſis of this kind; ſurpriſing us with the ſmart and unexpected turn, which it gives to the thought; and in the fewer words it is brought out, it is always the happier.

Compariſons and antitheſes are figures of a cool nature; the productions of imagination, not of paſſion. Interrogations and exclamations, of which I am next to ſpeak, are paſſionate figures. They are, indeed, on ſo many occaſions, the native language of paſſion, that their uſe is extremely frequent; and, in ordinary converſation, when men are heated, they prevail as much as in the moſt ſublime oratory. The unfigured, literal uſe of interrogation, is, to aſk a queſtion; but when men are prompted by paſſion, whatever they would affirm, or deny, with great vehemence, they naturally put in the form of a queſtion; expreſſing thereby the ſtrongeſt confidence of the truth of their own ſentiment, and

appealing to their hearers for the impoſſibility of the contrary. Thus, in ſcripture: "God is not "a man that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of "man that he ſhould repent. Hath he ſaid it? "And ſhall he not do it? Hath he ſpoken it? "And ſhall he not make it good *?" So Demoſthenes, addreſſing himſelf to the Athenians: "Tell me, will you ſtill go about and aſk one "another, what news? What can be more "aſtoniſhing news than this, that the man of "Macedon makes war upon the Athenians, and "diſpoſes of the affairs of Greece? — Is Philip "dead? No, but he is ſick. What ſignifies it "to you whether he be dead or alive? For, if "any thing happens to this Philip, you will "immediately raiſe up another." All this delivered without interrogation, had been faint and ineffectual; but the warmth and eagerneſs which this queſtioning method expreſſes, awakens the hearers, and ſtrikes them with much greater force.

Interrogations may often be employed with propriety, in the courſe of no higher emotions than naturally ariſe in purſuing ſome cloſe and earneſt reaſoning. But exclamations belong only to ſtronger emotions of the mind; to ſurpriſe, admiration, anger, joy, grief, and the like:

> Heu pietas! heu priſca fides! invictaque bello
> Dextera!

* Numbers, chap. xxiii. v. 19.

Both interrogation and exclamation, and, indeed, all paſſionate figures of ſpeech, operate upon us by means of ſympathy. Sympathy is a very powerful and extenſive principle in our nature, diſpoſing us to enter into every feeling and paſſion, which we behold expreſſed by others. Hence, a ſingle perſon coming into company with ſtrong marks, either of melancholy or joy, upon his countenance, will diffuſe that paſſion, in a moment, through the whole circle. Hence, in a great crowd, paſſions are ſo eaſily caught, and ſo faſt ſpread, by that powerful contagion which the animated looks, cries, and geſtures of a multitude never fail to carry. Now, interrogations and exclamations, being natural ſigns of a moved and agitated mind, always, when they are properly uſed, diſpoſe us to ſympathize with the diſpoſitions of thoſe who uſe them, and to feel as they feel.

From this it follows, that the great rule with regard to the conduct of ſuch figures is, that the writer attend to the manner in which nature dictates to us to expreſs any emotion or paſſion, and that he give his language that turn, and no other; above all, that he never affect the ſtyle of a paſſion which he does not feel. With interrogations he may uſe a good deal of freedom; theſe, as above obſerved, falling in ſo much with the ordinary courſe of language and reaſoning, even when no great vehemence is ſuppoſed to have place in the mind. But, with reſpect to exclamations, he muſt be more reſerved.

Nothing has a worſe effect than the frequent and unſeaſonable uſe of them. Raw, juvenile writers imagine, that, by pouring them forth often, they render their compoſitions warm and animated. Whereas quite the contrary follows. They render it frigid to exceſs. When an author is always calling upon us to enter into tranſports which he has ſaid nothing to inſpire, we are both diſguſted and enraged at him. He raiſes no ſympathy, for he gives us no paſſion of his own, in which we can take part. He gives us words, and not paſſion; and of courſe, can raiſe no paſſion, unleſs that of indignation. Hence, I incline to think, he was not much miſtaken, who ſaid, that when, on looking into a book, he found the pages thick beſpangled with the point which is called, "punctum admirationis," he judged this to be a ſufficient reaſon for his laying it aſide. And, indeed, were it not for the help of this "punctum admirationis," with which many writers of the rapturous kind ſo much abound, one would be often at a loſs to diſcover, whether or not it was exclamation which they aimed at. For, it has now become a faſhion, among theſe writers, to ſubjoin points of admiration to ſentences, which contain nothing but ſimple affirmations, or propoſitions, as if, by an affected method of pointing, they could transform them in the reader's mind into high figures of eloquence. Much a-kin to this, is another contrivance practiſed by ſome writers, of ſeparating, almoſt all the members of their ſentences from each

have, at the ſame time, no ſmall appearance of art and ſtudy; and, therefore, though they may be admitted into formal harangues, yet they ſpeak not the language of great earneſtneſs and paſſion, which ſeldom proceed by ſteps ſo regular. Nor, indeed, for the purpoſes of effectual perſuaſion, are they likely to be ſo ſucceſsful, as an arrangement of circumſtances in a leſs artificial order. For, when much art appears, we are always put on our guard againſt the deceits of eloquence; but when a ſpeaker has reaſoned ſtrongly, and, by force of argument, has made good his main point, he may then, taking advantage of the favorable bent of our minds, make uſe of ſuch artificial figures to confirm our belief, and to warm our minds.

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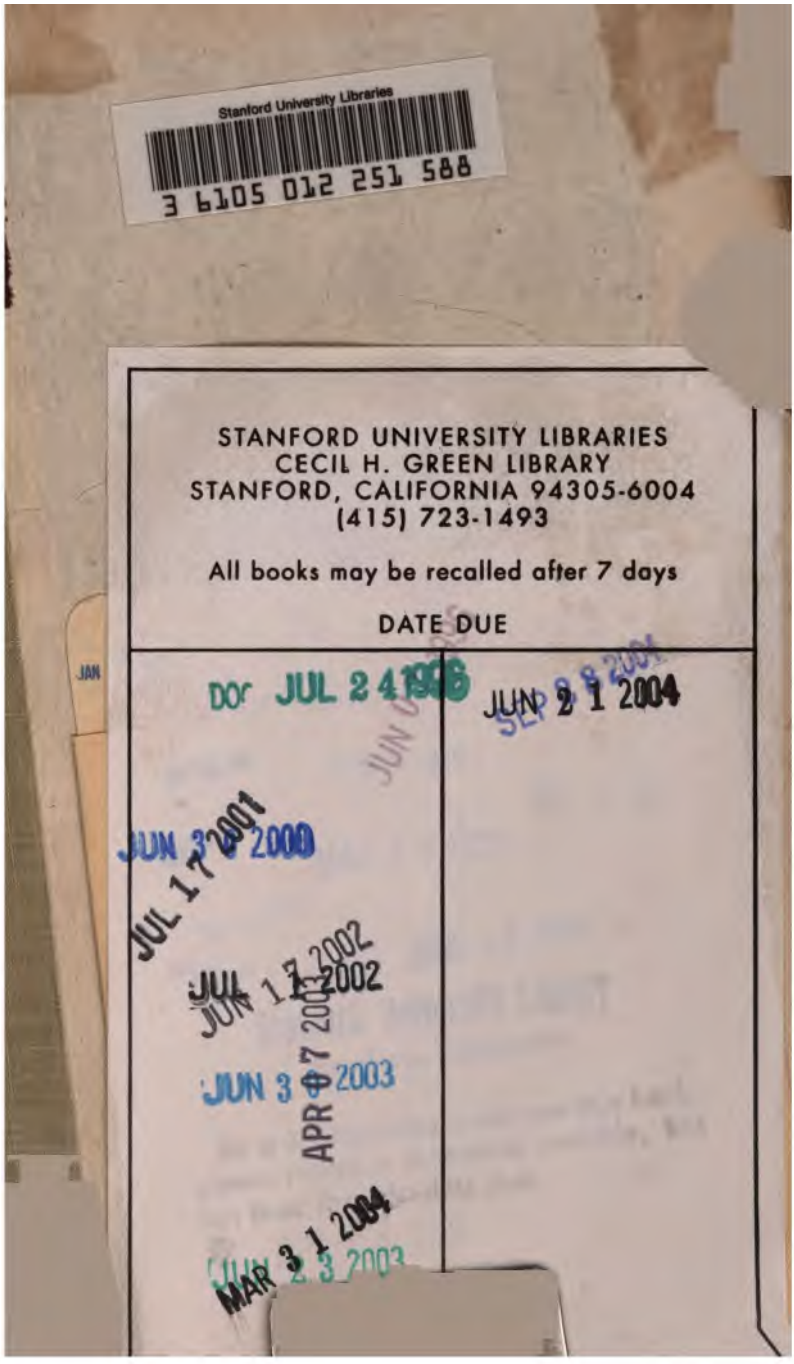
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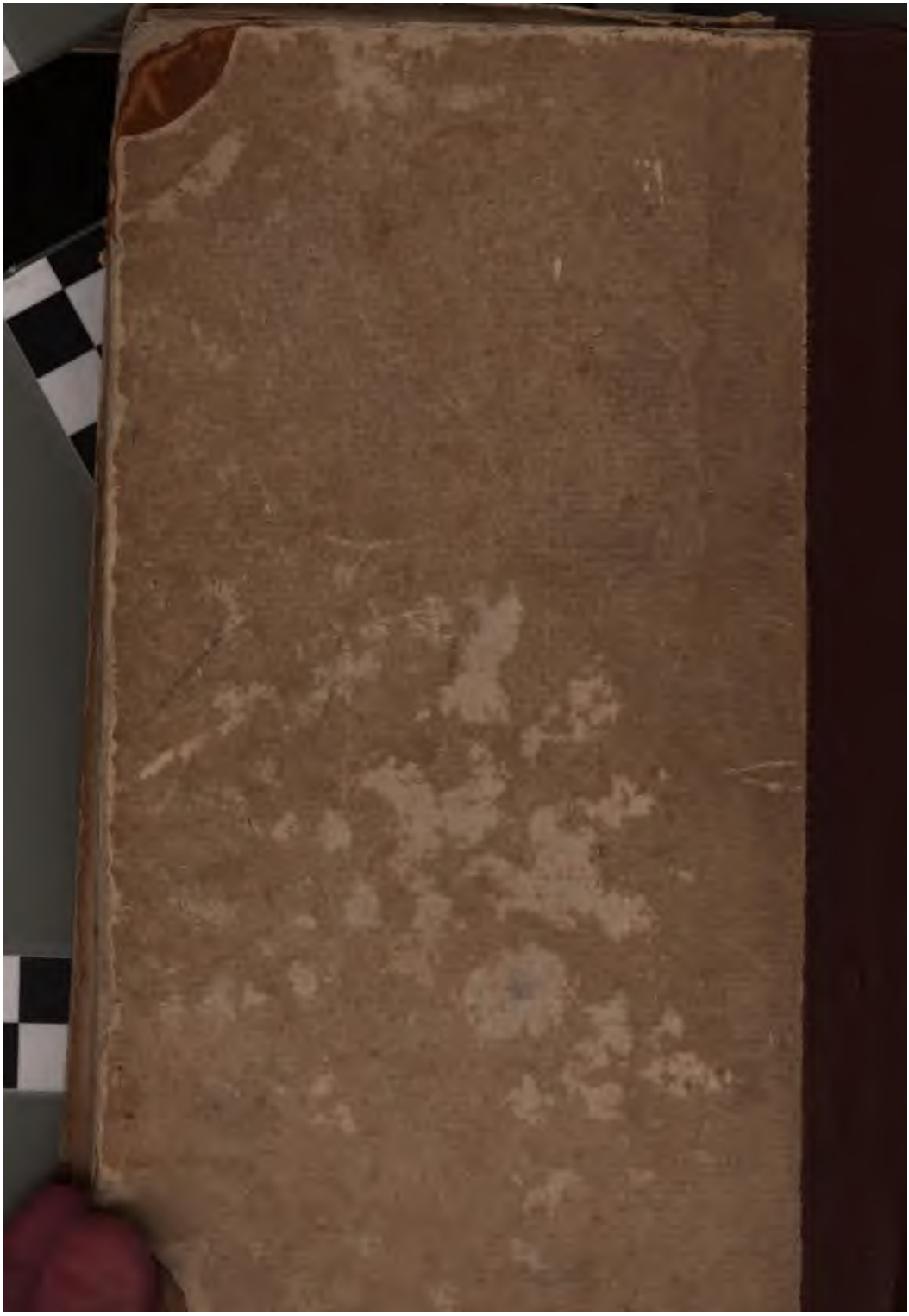
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